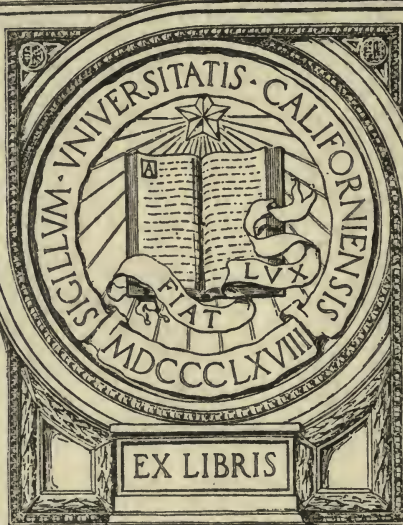




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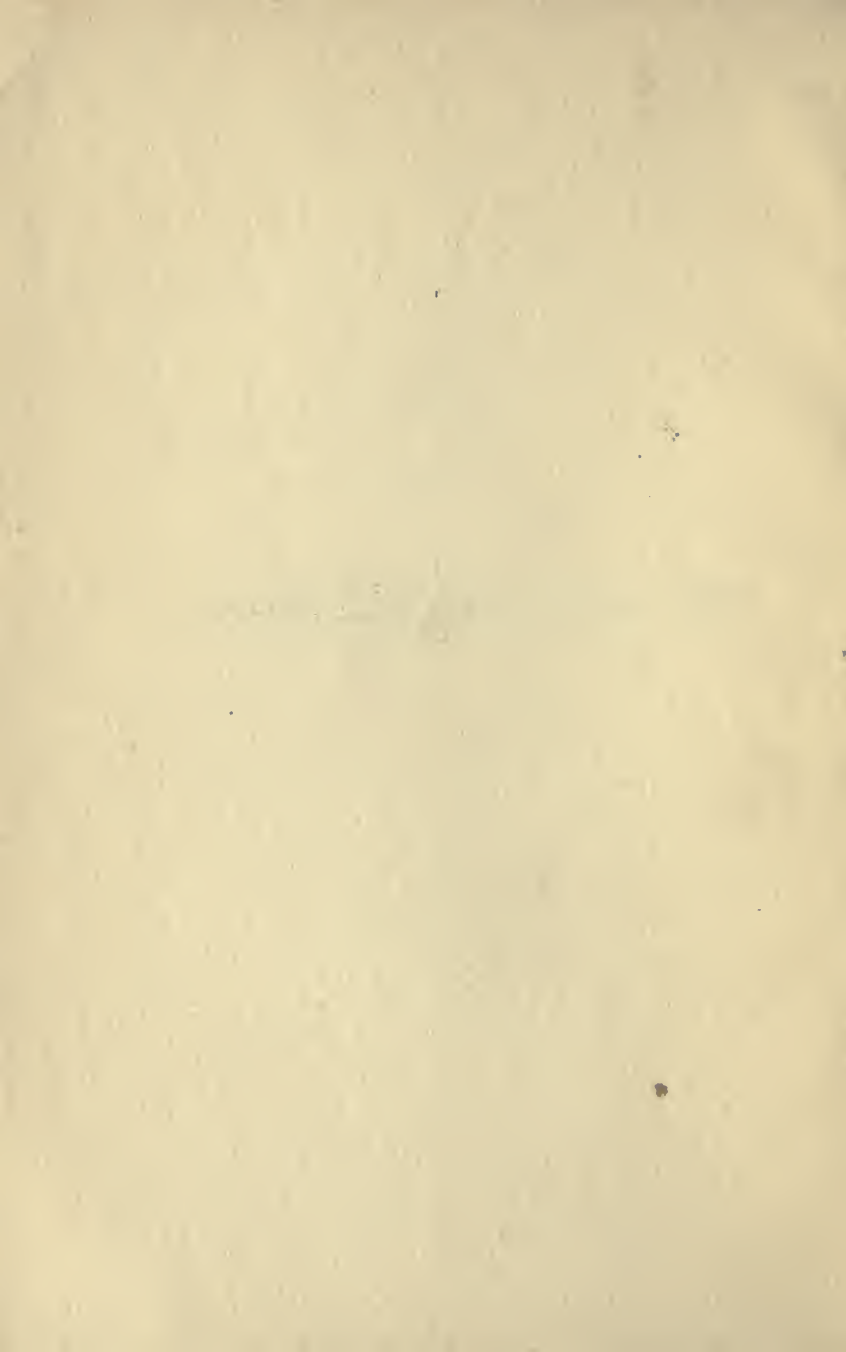


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THE MAGIC OF EXPERIENCE



THE MAGIC *of* EXPERIENCE

A CONTRIBUTION
TO THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

BY

H. STANLEY REDGROVE

B.Sc. (Lond.), F.C.S.



WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

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TO THE
ADVERTISERS
Philos - Always

THIS BOOK IS HUMBLY DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF THE GREAT MEN
WHOSE EXPERIENCE AND THOUGHT,
AS EMBODIED IN THEIR WORKS,
HAVE MADE THE WRITING OF IT POSSIBLE.

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Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise :
Give thanks unto Him, and bless His name.

Psalm c. 4.

Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be
believ'd.—WILLIAM BLAKE : *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

PREFACE

It is sometimes said that, whereas Science progresses, Philosophy is stagnant. I believe that this is profoundly false ; but there is this fragment of truth in the assertion :—Science is concerned with problems which are not ultimate—the questions she sets herself to answer are questions concerning the correlation of phenomena, not concerning their Source or ultimate significance—hence Science is continually solving her problems : but no sooner has she solved one than, as in the case of the heads of the hydra-headed monster of legend, another rises to take its place. Philosophy, on the other hand, never solves her problems, just because they are ultimate problems. But this is by no means to say that she is stagnant and never progresses, because she is continually approaching, though she may never gain, the final answer to her questioning. I do not think it unlikely that, had I lived in the days of Plato, I should have written a book on the theory of knowledge, and discussed some of the questions I am concerned with here ; but I do not think that it would have been as good, *i.e.*, as adequate, a book as this. Or, if this sounds conceited, let me say that I think that it would

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have been a worse, *i.e.*, a less adequate, book than this. The sentiment, at least, is not one of conceit. What I really want to express is my feeling of indebtedness to the past; my consciousness that Philosophy has progressed, and that by having been born late in the nineteenth century, I have profited by this progression.

The chief sources of my indebtedness may be gathered from the book itself, but a few names may, perhaps, be specified here. And I would mention Descartes first, because, as I think, he teaches that doubt which is the beginning of wisdom. It is necessary, so it seems to me, to disbelieve rightly before one can believe rightly,—to cast out opinions based on authority, convention, or mere hearsay, before clear knowledge is possible. And then I would name Berkeley and Mill,¹ because they completed the work of Descartes; it is they who tell us to believe the clear evidence of our senses—of our consciousness—in preference to the speculative hypotheses of materialistic and deterministic philosophers. But were we to rest here, we should leave a whole world of experience uninvestigated. We must turn to the mystics² to complete the work of the idealists. It is, per-

¹ To avoid misunderstanding, let me at once say that I differ from Mill on many very important points.

² "Mysticism" is a very ambiguous word: I attempt to define it in the course of the book.

haps, difficult to select names for special mention, but I think they must be, as concerns my own indebtedness, those of Jacob Boehme ; John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist ; and, most assuredly, the great Swedish scientist-philosopher-theologian, Emanuel Swedenborg, whose illuminating works deserve to be valued by contemporary philosophical thought to a greater extent than is the case.

I do not want here to enter upon a discussion of the question of the necessity of technical terms to Philosophy. But I would say that I have endeavoured to avoid all undue technicalities in this book, and I believe that the ordinary reader, to whom the average work on academic philosophy is as intelligible as Elliptic Functions or Chinese, will find it, if not exactly light literature, at least quite easily understandable. It is not, however, I hope, a "popular" book, in the sense in which that word implies inaccuracy and superficiality of treatment.

There are some people who are never happy unless they can attach a label to everything. They seem, and this is the worst of it, to imagine that this labelling can take the place of adequate criticism ; and they dismiss this and that contribution to Philosophy with a shrug of the shoulders, and the airy remark that it is only Pantheism or

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Hylozoism or some other "ism." If my own views must be labelled, then I would prefer the label to be one of my own choosing, and I do not think that I can choose a better one than "Idealistic or Rational Empiricism." I use the term "empiricism," because I believe that no true knowledge is attainable apart from experience. I use the term "rational," because I believe that bare experience is not sufficient for this end : experience must be interpreted by reason. Experience, I believe, is the obverse of a coin of which the reverse is revelation : inductive reasoning is, in a sense, a magic ritual whereby fuller or higher revelation becomes possible : but the data of experience are the symbolic elements of this ritual, without which it cannot be performed or its products obtained. Finally, I use the term "idealistic," because I believe that all knowledge is knowledge of ideas, of the relations between ideas, and of minds wherein ideas exist. For me, "ideality" and "unreality" are antonyms, not synonyms. I hold that Spirit is the One Substance of the Universe, all of whose phenomena are, therefore, spiritual phenomena, *i.e.*, changes of one sort or another in ideas. This last sentence may sound like a confession of ontological rather than epistemological faith ; but it is neither possible nor desirable to draw too hard and fast a line of demarcation

between Ontology, the science of being, and Epistemology, the science of knowledge.

Having acknowledged, though inadequately, my debt to the past, I would, in conclusion, express my gratitude to those of the present who in one way or another have facilitated the production of this book. And firstly, I must express my indebtedness to Sir W. F. Barrett, F.R.S., not only for having written so excellent an Introduction to the book, but also for having read it in typescript and made several useful suggestions, the majority of which I have been able to carry out. I have to express my thanks to the Editors of *The Occult Review*, *The Quest*, and *The New-Church Magazine* for having allowed me to incorporate in this book material afforded by three of my essays published, one in each of their journals, under the titles, "The Idealistic Point of View," "The Sight of the Soul," and "The Criteria of Truth." I have further to offer my hearty thanks to Miss I. M. L. Cowen for valuable assistance in preparing the typescript for the press and in reading the proof-sheets, to Mr. H. F. Trobridge for a number of useful criticisms and suggestions, and to Mr. Sijil Abdul-Ali for having read the proofs.

H. S. R.

THE POLYTECHNIC,
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INTRODUCTION

To that large class of thoughtful enquirers who have not made a special study of philosophy, the accompanying volume—to which the author has asked me to write a few words of Introduction,—will be found a useful and lucid interpretation of the facts of experience in the light of a sane idealism.

The first concept we form of reality is that derived from our sense-impressions, and the world around us is regarded as a real and permanent existence independent of mind. Then reason teaches us that what we term “the properties of matter” are known to us only as *sensations*, percepts of our minds, and that we really know nothing of *matter in itself*, that is, nothing beyond the properties which we experience as sensations.

How different our concept of the external world would be if we were deprived of some of those gateways of knowledge — the senses — such, for example, as sight or touch ; and again how different if other and more subtle senses — profounder avenues of knowledge—were given to us ! Consider what concept of matter we should form if

we possessed merely the sense of sight. Every stimulus given to the optic nerve, whether by pressure, electricity, or a chemical reagent, would be sensed only as a flash of light, and we should thereupon infer that all material bodies, all phenomena, were simply variations in luminosity, and that nothing else besides these had any real existence outside ourselves. So also if we were restricted to any one of our other senses, the external world in each case would excite but the single idea corresponding to that sense. Therefore all we can assert is that external phenomena arouse a succession of mental states, and our present interpretation of those states may be only a little less fallacious than the erroneous interpretation we should give if the human race possessed but a single sensory organ.

Our ideas of the world without us accordingly contract or expand in proportion to the extent of the means by which that world is perceived. Now perception is impossible without a mind to perceive, hence Bishop Berkeley asserted that no object can exist apart from mind. Mind is certainly the deeper reality, and nature may be merely a construction of, and projection from, our own minds ; nor can we, logically, be compelled to admit that the physical world exists otherwise than in our thought. But this purely subjective

idealism, or *solipsism*, was not Berkeley's view. Solipsism denies the existence of other minds, as well as the physical world, except as ideas in one's *own* mind, and as it maintains that one's own thought and consciousness alone exist, it is pure egoism. Berkeley, however, maintains that whilst matter has no independent existence, the permanence of the physical world and of the laws of nature, as well as the existence of minds other than our own, is guaranteed by the existence of a Universal Mind. Nature and ourselves are, from this point of view, the appearance or vesture of the Divine Idea—the world of Divine Thought, which is the real world. Our sensory experiences are, therefore, not imaginary, but are caused by the will of the Divine Intelligence ; and science is the attempt to decipher the divine ideas expressed in nature, so far as our limited cognition enables us to interpret them.

Hence the common notion of Berkeley's idealism is seen to be incorrect. For nature does not exist only in the thought of men, nor for the thought of any one man, nor by the united thoughts of all men, but it exists as the symbolical expression of the Divine thought, and is perpetually sustained by the Divine Will.

Against this view is the difficulty of accounting for the independent existence and activity of the

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conscious self, for self-consciousness cannot be regarded as being merely a succession of conscious states—the self is not an idea, not an object of internal observation. Berkeley's answer is that the ego is one of a world of free and independent spirits, such finite minds being related to one another and to the Infinite Mind by their mutual interactions. But even so the difficulty arises of how our self-consciousness regards itself as finite and how the notion of an external world can arise in consciousness.

The idea of *force* lying behind our sensations gives the notion of externality to the object of our perception. This idea of force is that of some resistance encountered, some opposition to our will, to overcome which effort is needed. But the ego itself is only conscious of its activity when that activity is opposed, that is, when effort is needed. Effort, therefore, lies at the root of consciousness; an effortless action arouses no consciousness of the act. But behind the sense of effort in the ego lies the feeling of impulse or desire, of something to attain. Effort, therefore, implies desire and opposition to that desire. Moreover, to produce any effort requires power, that is, the exertion of force. Hence, consciousness, in so far as it is the activity of the ego, is force striving to overcome force, impelled by desire or affection; and the

notion of force is that of opposition to our will from our contact with external nature.

Whatever view we take, we are, therefore, compelled to admit that all our experience of phenomena is due to some form of action from without upon our own minds. The materialist says that this action is due to things in themselves, to a self-existent objective world : the idealist says that this action is due to the Divine Mind and Will. To the materialist, the stream of consciousness within us accompanies the brain-processes, as a shadow accompanies an object : mind is thus regarded as an *epiphenomenon* of the brain-processes, and as having no existence apart from these processes. To the idealist, the position is reversed : matter is, as it were, the shadow thrown by thought, and has no existence apart from thought. Another school of philosophy regards both mind and matter as equally real, but as having no causal relation to each other ; matter and mind are supposed to pursue parallel paths which never intersect. Again, another school, like that of Kant, regards matter and mind as two aspects of a supreme reality, which is unknown to us ;—mind and matter being appearances of that underlying reality, which some, with Spencer, call “The Unknowable,” others, with Kant, call “God.” The laws of nature reveal order because our sense-impressions are partial

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manifestations in our finite minds of the archetypes of their existence in the Infinite and Supreme Order.

That this ultimate reality is Mind, an originating Divine Mind—of which our human minds give us a faint adumbration—appears unquestionable from many converging reasons and streams of evidence. Take, for example, the intelligibility and continuity of nature. We can read and understand the expression of human thought in a printed page because we have something in common with the writer of the page, and that something is *mind*. The printed words do not enable us to see the author, nor do they remotely resemble him. But the printed signs are intelligible because our intelligence is related to his intelligence. And so the mental signs which the phenomena of nature present to us are not the real world, for the world of ontology, the world of Divine Thought, is inaccessible to us. But these signs reveal order and purpose and we can more or less imperfectly interpret those signs, because they are an expression of an Intelligence which is related to our intelligence and can communicate with our minds. As the processes of nature, the forms and wonder of life, reveal intelligence, purpose, and will, we are therefore driven to conclude that the ultimate reality lying behind nature must be a Supreme Mind.

As I have said elsewhere, "To the pure materialist the Universe is self-sustained and has no deeper meaning than the appearance it presents to our senses; these appearances are to him the ultimate reality.¹ He sees nature, as it were like the curious orderly marks on a printed page, but it conveys to him—as the page does to a person who cannot read—no deeper meaning; he attributes the order, regularity, and continuity of the printing to the interaction of the black marks among themselves, a chance collocation of atoms. Or he forms a mechanical theory of the Universe by endowing atoms with some occult power, and conferring upon them the very properties which have to be explained."²

In an admirable, though too little known, paper on "The Origin of Force," which Sir John Herschel published some fifty years ago, he remarks—"The first and greatest question which Philosophy has to resolve in its attempts to make out a Cosmos is whether we can derive any light from our internal consciousness of thought, reason, power, will, motive, design—or not : whether, that

¹ Or rather he postulates a material self-existent universe as the ultimate reality, a universe which happens to excite sensation and experience.

² *The Contemporary Review*, June 1914. See also the present writer's little book on *Creative Thought and the Problem of Evil* (Watkins, 1914).

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is to say, nature is or is not *more interpretable* by supposing these things (be they what they may) to have had, or to have, to do with its arrangements. Constituted as the human mind is, if nature be *not* interpretable through these conceptions, it is not interpretable at all ; and the only reason we can have for troubling ourselves about it is the utilitarian one of bettering our condition by ' subduing nature ' to our use, . . . or the satisfaction of that sort of aimless curiosity which can find its gratification in scrutinising everything and comprehending nothing. But if these attributes of mind are not consentaneous, they are useless in the way of explanation. Will without Motive, Power without Design, Thought opposed to Reason, would be admissible in explaining a *chaos*, but would render little aid in accounting for anything else." ³ Philosophy is thus the re-thinking of experience.

In the latter part of this volume, the author shows that whilst truth cannot be attained apart from experience, there are, nevertheless, forms of experience which transcend our recognised sense-perceptions. Telepathy is one of these : and the higher intuitions which prophets, poets, and mystics in all ages have had, reveal a profounder world than that of " sense and outward things."

³ Sir J. W. HERSCHEL : *Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, p. 475.

Life, which, to the eye of sense alone, breaks itself up into a multiplicity of forms, and individuals endowed with consciousness, seemingly a collection of independent self-existing facts, is by intuition recognised as only varied modes of one infinite life. We are seen to be parts of a larger whole, beings in an ideal order. Thus we are led to realise that that which is of highest importance in each individual life is the recognition, the development, and the manifestation of the divine life within.

WILLIAM F. BARRETT.

PART I
IDEALISM

THE MAGIC OF EXPERIENCE

PART I

IDEALISM

§ 1. ALL experience is subjective, *i.e.* exists within the mind of the individual who experiences. But in spite of the self-evident nature of this fact, its significance does not seem always to be fully recognised ; otherwise, materialistic theories of the Cosmos would be propounded with a less degree of assurance than is actually the case. For as Berkeley showed, and as will be plain in the sequel, the fact that all experience is subjective is incompatible with materialism ; unfortunately, however, Berkeley is very frequently misunderstood and supposed to teach that experience is unreliable, an idea quite alien to Idealism.

§ 2. In order to get at the root of the matter, let us attempt an analytical examination of experience in general, ridding ourselves as far as possible of all preconceptions on the subject. In the first place, then, we may distinguish between what

The Sub-
jectivity of
Experience

General
Analysis of
Experience

are respectively termed "sense-impressions" or "ideas of sensation" and "ideas of the imagination" or "mental images." Thus, at the present moment I am experiencing numerous sensations, chiefly visual sensations of colour, which go to make up my study in which I am writing and the various objects it contains. If I care to shut my eyes, however, I can at once transport myself into entirely different surroundings; but what I then experience are images created by my imagination, not sensations. The feelings or emotions arising on account of sense-impressions and mental images may be grouped together as a third element of experience. And, as a fourth element, may be grouped together all those experiences, e.g., visions, intuitions, etc., which are termed "spiritual," in contradistinction from the other three "natural" elements. The existence of the first three elements of experience no one denies, but the same cannot be said of this alleged fourth element. I shall deal with this question more especially in Part II. With the third element in experience specified above (feelings and emotions) I am not concerned in this book, except in so far as this tends to become identified with the fourth element (visions and intuitions). What I am immediately concerned with is the distinction between the first two elements (sensations and mental images).

§ 3. In common opinion and according to the terms of materialistic philosophy, sensations and mental images differ from each other inasmuch as sensations arise on account of a material world external to us, with which they are immediately connected, whilst mental images do not so arise, and have no immediate connection with this material world. Thus, I have a visual sensation of red at the present moment, because there happens to be a red-coloured book, a material book, existing in the material world outside of me in the line of my vision, but I cannot have at the moment a similar sensation of purple, because a purple-coloured object, with which I can put my eyes in a similar relation, is not handy. I must, therefore, be content with a mental image of purple, which I can obtain without the aid of the material world, except, of course, that part of it I call "my brain." A moment's consideration, however, shows us that this is not a statement of the differences between sensations and mental images *as experienced*—the differences, *i.e.*, in virtue of which we are entitled to divide our experiences into these two categories, and in virtue of which we can determine to which category any one of our experiences belongs. It is not this, but a hypothesis to explain such differences assumed existent. It may be a valid hypothesis; on the other hand, it may not. Let us,

On the differences between Sense Impressions and Mental Images

however, attempt a statement of these differences without involving ourselves in any hypotheses whatever—then, and not until then, when we know the differences that need explaining, shall we be in a position to suggest a hypothesis in explanation of these differences.

(i.) Differences in Vividness

§ 4. An examination of one's own experience reveals two differences between those forms of experience termed respectively "sense-impressions" and "mental images." In the first place, sense-impressions are generally very vivid compared with mental images. This difference, however, is a purely relative one. Sensations which are not attended to and barely penetrate the fringe of consciousness can hardly be called vivid; whilst in dreams, on the other hand, whatever may be the cause, the dramatic images in our imaginations take on an apparent vividness comparable only with the sense-impressions of our daily life.¹

(ii.) Differences in our Control

§ 5. The second and more fundamental distinction between sense-impressions and ideas of the imagination is to be found in the degree of control we have over them. If I desire to do so,

¹ The reason may be that lacking any sense-impressions with which to compare them, the images of our dreams appear far more vivid than would otherwise be the case.

merely by an effort of will I can conjure up in my mind a complete mental image of an orange, *i.e.*, not merely a visual image of an orange, but representatives of all the sense-impressions connoted by the term, such as the characteristic taste, odour, etc. But in order to experience the corresponding sense-impressions, I must first of all experience certain other sense-impressions — such complex series of sensations I call “going to the fruiterer’s and buying an orange,” or “instructing some one to procure me an orange,” etc.—and it is, of course, quite possible that in any given case I may not be able to obtain the desired sense-impression however much I may strive so to do.

Sense-impressions always occur in certain groups and follow definite and fixed orders. Thus, the characteristic gustatory and odoriferous sensations connoted by the term “orange” are always accompanied by such sensations as those of roundness, smoothness, yellowness, etc. Or to take another example: the complex series of sense-impressions called “putting one’s hand in the fire” is invariably followed by an intense sensation of pain. These orders in the groupings and sequences of sense-impressions constitute what are called “the laws of Nature,” and our control of our sense-impressions is strictly limited thereby. It is quite easy to call up in the mind representations

of all the other sense-impressions connoted by the term "orange," substituting, however, an idea of pinkness in place of yellowness, or squareness in place of roundness; but similar groupings of sense-impressions themselves have never been experienced.² Or to take another example: it is quite easy to picture in one's mind the process of putting one's hand in the fire, without at all proceeding to conjure up a representation of the very painful sensations which inevitably follow the corresponding sequence of sense-impressions.

These the
Only Differences
given in
Experience

§ 6. Now, it is of the very utmost importance to notice that these two differences are the only differences between sense-impressions and mental images of which we have any consciousness, and it is wholly in virtue of these that we divide our experiences into the two groups we call respectively "sense-impressions" and "mental images," and decide to which group any particular state of consciousness is to be assigned. In everyday life, we have, as a rule, no difficulty in deciding this question; for, usually, our sense-impressions are very vivid, whilst our mental images are very vague, compared one with the other. And in any

² It is true, of course, that it might be possible to make an artificial orange to conform to the required conditions, but this does not really alter the argument.

case of doubt, the method adopted to decide the question always depends, in the last analysis, on the difference in our power of control over these two forms of experience. In dreams, however, the spurious vividness of the dramatic play of mental images deceives us—we mistake them for sense-impressions—and it seems that in dreams our nearly absolute power of controlling the ideas of the imagination is dormant, though it appears that some persons³ are dimly conscious, occasionally, of a power to control their dreams to some slight extent. But, at any rate, the irregular order in which our dream-ideas succeed one another serves to distinguish them from sense-impressions, which, as remarked above, always occur in definite and fixed sequences.

§ 7. As I have already indicated, the usual explanation of the differences between those forms of experience called respectively “sense-impressions” and “ideas of the imagination” is that the former arise on account of an objective world of matter external to us, with which they are in intimate relation, whereas the latter bear no direct relation to this world. It is necessary, however,

Matter as a
Phenomenon

³ The present writer has experienced this on two or three occasions. Cf. Dr. FREDERIK VAN EEDEN: “A Study of Dreams” (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, July 1913, vol. xxvi., pp. 431 et seq.).

to distinguish between two different uses of the word "matter," or rather "material body." When an ordinary person, who has not been sophisticated by the tenets of materialistic philosophy, speaks of a "material body," say an apple, what he means is a body that has a certain size, shape, hardness, colour, taste, smell, etc. Now, evidently there can be no doubt as to the existence of such bodies, since they consist of complexes of ideas of sensation, and when we speak of the existence of a sensation what we mean is that it is perceived. The only point is that it is hardly correct to speak of a body which *possesses* shape, size, hardness, colour, etc. (unless the reference is to a mind in which these sense-impressions exist, *i.e.*, a mind which perceives them); it would be more accurate to speak of a body which *is* this shape, size, hardness, colour, etc. A similar sense of the word "matter," moreover, seems to be the only legitimate one with which it may be employed in science—*i.e.*, as connoting the fact or natural law that sense-impressions always occur in definite groups, the name "material body" being given to any such group—since, strictly speaking, science is only concerned with facts of experience as such, the orders in which they occur and the relations they bear to one another; not with the sources or causes of experience. Professor Ostwald, however, who is perhaps

the greatest living authority on physical chemistry, questions whether the term "matter" ought not to be deleted from scientific terminology. He says in his *Fundamental Principles of Chemistry*, "—the idea that there is something more in the concept of matter than the expression of a set of experiences and their reduction to a law of nature has persisted from earlier times. Matter is looked upon as something originally existing, which is at the bottom of all phenomena and in a sense independent of them all. The concept of matter can be shown, however, to be made up of the simpler concepts weight, mass, and volume, and it is certainly less fundamental than these. The law of the invariable connection of these properties has already been expressed in the concepts *body* and *substance*," [I should prefer to use only the former of these terms in this sense] "so there is no necessity for the formation of a new concept to express the same thing. The word 'matter' is so closely connected with the ideas mentioned above that it is not advisable to retain it; we shall therefore not make any use of it whatever." ⁴

§ 8. This brings me to the second use of the word "matter." By materialistic philosophers

Matter as a
Substance

⁴ WILHELM OSTWALD: *The Fundamental Principles of Chemistry* (trans. by H. W. Morse, 1909), § 7.

the term "matter" is employed not merely to connote the fact that sense-impressions always occur in definite groups, but as supplying an explanation of this fact. Matter is supposed to be a *thing-in-itself*, something existing outside of all conscious beings, independent, in a sense, of all phenomena and all experience. In other words, Matter is regarded as Substance in the metaphysical and not Professor Ostwald's meaning of that term. This hypothetical matter is supposed to possess certain properties or attributes, each of which is held to be responsible for a definite sense-impression. Thus, we find certain sense-impressions, such as roundness, yellowness, smoothness, juiciness and a characteristic taste and smell, grouped together, and this we call "an orange." According to the materialistic theory, each one of these sense-impressions is dependent upon a certain property of matter; we find them always grouped together in this way, because the properties of matter on which they depend are always grouped together in the same portion of matter—the real material orange. We can experience a mental image of a pink orange or a cubical orange; but we cannot experience the corresponding sense-impressions, because a real pink material orange or a real cubical material orange does not exist.

§ 9. But if one presses the materialist, he is obliged to confess that matter possesses neither colour, taste nor smell. The material orange, he will tell you, is not really yellow, nor has it any odour or taste in itself. These, so-called secondary properties of matter, are, he says, not inherent in matter itself, but are produced by the interaction between it and the bodily senses. On the other hand, it is maintained that the so-called primary properties of matter, such as size, shape, motion, etc., do exist in it apart from any perceiving mind. But, as Berkeley showed, the distinction between the so-called primary and secondary properties of matter is essentially a vicious one; for size, shape, motion, etc., are as much ideas of sensation as are colours, tastes and odours, and as such exist equally only in a perceiving mind. "Some truths there are," says Berkeley, "so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, to wit, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind, that their *being* (*esse*) is to be perceived or known; that consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind or that of any other *created spirit*, they must either have no exist-

ence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit : it being perfectly unintelligible and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of a spirit. To be convinced of which, the reader need only reflect and try to separate in his own thoughts the being of a sensible thing from its being perceived.”⁵

Matter as a
Substance
Unknowable

§ 10. Even according to the materialistic theory itself it is evident that we can know nothing of matter beyond its properties, nothing of matter itself, since *ex hypothesi* matter exists outside of mind and is, therefore, unknowable. Divest an orange of all its properties and what remains? If the materialistic theory were true, we should have pure matter, matter in itself; but, in point of fact, so far as we are concerned, we have absolutely nothing. It seems, therefore, rather absurd to limit the application of the term “real” to the hypothetical material orange—using the term “material” as the materialists employ it, as denoting not merely a phenomenon, but a thing-in-itself existing apart from mind. Is it not evident that the sum of the sense-impressions connoted by the term, the phenomenal orange, is the real

⁵ GEORGE BERKELEY : *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* (edition in Everyman's Library; edited by A. D. Lindsay), § vi.

orange, the only orange we do and can know? In other words, is it not evident that a material body is merely the sum of its properties, which are sense-impressions and thus exist only in mind?

§ 11. To such an extent has our language be-
come impregnated by materialistic ideas that the
term "imaginary" has come to mean something
the reverse of real: the assumption underlying this
use of the word, of course, is that reality is
connoted by the term "matter." It is abundantly
evident, however, that a mental image—an
"imaginary" thing—is a real existence in the
individual mind. The comparative unimportance
of mental images is not because they are unreal,
but because they are almost entirely under our
control. If I experience those sense-impressions I
call "putting my hand in the fire," then, inevitably,
I shall also experience a very vivid sensation of pain,
and not only this, but it may very probably happen
that the possibility of my experiencing other sensa-
tions may become permanently inhibited—in
ordinary language, my hand may be permanently
destroyed. It is highly important, therefore, that
I do not experience those sense-impressions I call
"putting my hand in the fire." But the corre-
sponding play of ideas in the imagination implies
no such unpleasant consequences. I can mentally

Subjective
Reality

reproduce or imagine the series of sense-impressions of putting my hand in the fire and then banish the ideas from my mind. When this power of control over mental images is lost or inhibited, as in dreams, hysteria and madness generally, they are no longer distinguished from sense-impressions. It is evident, therefore, that we call sensations "real," and mental images "unreal," not because they are thus distinguished, for clearly both forms of experience are real as such (though, indeed, sense-impressions are generally more "real," in the sense of more vivid, than mental images), but because the latter are in every sense our own, originating and existing only in our individual minds ; whereas our sense-impressions are determined according to an order (laws of nature) imposed on us from without and in virtue of which our control of them is strictly limited.

The Laws of
Nature Uni-
versally Valid

§ 12. Of course, in a manner, our individual sense-impressions are real for each one of us alone.

As sensations they exist in the minds of each one of us, and for each one of us alone. But in another manner our sense-impressions are, to a large extent, universally valid. It is not, however, altogether easy to make plain exactly in what way this statement is true, without involving the hypothesis of an external world ; and from this fact may be

concluded the validity of such a hypothesis, when divested of the untenable assumption that the matter of this world is anything more than the sum of its properties, anything more than itself a phenomenon, existing only in mind. For although the external world is external to my individual mind, it cannot be external to mind considered universally. We must, on the other hand, beware of overstating the facts. We are not justified in saying that the world which exists in one individual mind is the same as that which exists in the mind of some other individual. Indeed, we cannot even say that for any two individuals, sense-impressions are identical which are denoted by the same name, for we have no means of directly comparing sensations existing in different individual minds. Thus you and I may agree as to what bodies are red, but how is it possible to determine whether the sense-impression I call "red" is the same as that which you call "red"? All we can state is the principle of relativity: though, indeed, this is of immense importance. Our individual sense-impressions, said to be one in origin, may or may not be different; but the relations or connections between them, we know, are identical. Thus, the distance I call "one inch" may be longer to me than to you, but for both of us the distance called "two inches" is twice that called "one inch." My red may

not be your red, but we are entirely agreed as to what bodies *are* red. In other words, the same laws of nature are true for all of us : our individual sense-impressions are all subject to the same rules of order and sequence. It is not merely true for me that the series of sense-impressions I call " putting my hand in the fire " is followed by intense pain ; this and all other determinations in the orders and sequences of sense-impressions which lie beyond man's control are true for every individual. A teacher is lecturing at the blackboard to an attentive class ; if one of the students experiences, at some moment, a mental image of the blackboard falling over, it certainly by no means follows that any other, or others, of the students present will experience a like mental image. On the other hand, however, if one of the students experiences the corresponding sense-impressions, each one of the students present will, in general, experience corresponding sense-impressions. This fact is expressed by saying that, in the latter case, the hypothetical material blackboard giving rise to the sense-impressions of a blackboard in the mind of each student has actually fallen over ; though we really know nothing beyond the fact that all the individuals present experienced corresponding sense-impressions.

§ 13. We must, however, guard against the error that there is any necessity in the laws of nature. It follows from what has already been said on the subject that a law of nature is merely a statement in terms as general as possible of what sense-impressions we may expect to follow any given series of other sense-impressions. Our knowledge of these laws is wholly empirical, *i.e.*, derived from experience. Indeed, John Stuart Mill, in his *System of Logic*,⁶ conclusively shows that this is true even of the most fundamental laws of Science, the axioms of Mathematics, and the term "necessary" applies to them in no sense other than that of "most certain." Now, the mere certainty of any fact of experience supplies us with no explanation of its occurrence. The supposed necessity of the laws of nature leaves us entirely in the dark as to why our sense-impressions should occur in the regular sequences in which they do, or why they should follow any regular order at all. Indeed, the only explanation that is possible is the attribution of them to an active agent, *i.e.*, a Spirit or Will, which prefers, for our benefit and guidance, to operate in a regular, rather than in a capricious, manner.

The Laws of
Nature not
Necessary

⁶ See the Section on "Necessary Truths."

The Exist-
ence of a
Universal
Mind

§ 14. Moreover, we find that it is not always necessary to the fulfilment of a natural law, for the preceding sequence of sense-impressions to be restricted to one mind. Indeed, we often experience the consequents of laws which have, so to speak, worked apart from the individual mind altogether, and we are compelled to postulate a Divine, *i.e.*, a Universal, Mind.

We cannot, in truth, restrict the Universe to the concept of it in the individual mind. The possibilities of sense-impressions far transcend the experience of any individual, or even the experiences of all individuals. Processes take place which no man has ever experienced, and which, therefore, do not exist in the individual mind, processes which we know must have taken place because the results of such do come within the experience of the individual. We cannot believe, for example,⁷ that the flowers and the trees, the stones and rivers of some hitherto unexplored and uninhabited country, spring into existence the moment they begin to exist in the mind of the explorer. We must at least admit the perennial possibility of their existence as sense-impressions in any and every individual mind. In other words, we must admit the existence of a world external to

⁷ All the facts of Evolution may also be quoted in support of the above conclusion.

us, existing for us as " a permanent possibility of sensation," to use John Stuart Mill's apt phrase. This world may be referred to as an objective, material world ; but here, of course, the word " material " has a very different connotation from that with which materialistic philosophers employ it.

§ 15. Care must be taken, however, when we speak of a world *external* to us, not to understand this in a spatial sense. Materialistic philosophy has made us apt to think of " within " as referring to that portion of space marked out by our bodies, and " without " as referring to the rest of space. A little reflection, however, shows that this is an error. By the " within " is meant the region where our will reigns supreme, where, flowing only into thought and not into action, the will meets with no opposition ; in other words, the " within " is the realm of Imagination. By the " without " is meant, on the other hand, that region where the will, flowing into action, meets with felt opposition; in other words, the realm of Nature. All our actions may, in the last analysis, be reduced to the effecting of accelerations and retardations of the motions of bodies, and there is no body so flimsy and light as not to exhibit inertia, *i.e.*, resistance to change of uniform motion ; indeed, we can never

Externality
and Will!

get rid of friction, and that resists, not merely change of motion, but motion itself. Were it possible to annihilate the inertias of bodies, it seems highly probable that the distinction between the "within" and the "without" would vanish; hence this distinction is not one of space. Moreover, however closely we may examine man's body, nowhere do we discover pure will: we do, indeed, observe many of its effects, but so do we in the world that lies outside of his body. We may search the tiniest cells of the body, yet spirit, the "within," eludes us. Evidently, therefore, spirit is not in space. Indeed, no other conclusion could be possible, since space, being an idea, can exist only in mind or spirit; and if space exists in spirit, spirit cannot exist in space. The fact that the external world is the product of a Will not our own constitutes its externality, and not any supposed spatial relations between it and us.

Fallacy of
"Christian
Science"
Metaphysics

§ 16. The laws of nature, *i.e.*, the determinations of the Divine Will, are universally true; at least, so far as our experience allows us to judge. It is evident, therefore, that the world of sensuous experience is not an illusion of "the mortal mind," as is taught by the metaphysics of "Christian Science." It is necessary to insist on this point, because it is very

frequently thought that epistemological idealism, as elaborated by Berkeley and his followers, supports this chief tenet of "Christian Science." Nothing of the sort is true. Berkeley everywhere asserts the validity of our sense-impressions, arguing against the materialistic philosophers who would also (though in another manner) make them to some extent misleading. The same laws of nature, *i.e.*, the same orderly sequences in our sense-impressions, hold good for every one of us, whether we know of them or not : the result is always that predicted by such laws whether expected or not. For example : A student who is beginning the study of Chemistry adds a drop or two of litmus solution to a mineral acid ; a red colour is invariably the result, though the student may have no idea what colour to expect, or may even, through some error or the other, suppose that it will, say, be green. Surely this would not be the case if sensuous experience were merely an illusion of the mortal mind ? Such facts are, indeed, entirely destructive of "Christian Science" metaphysics, which confuses mental images with sense-impressions ; though they are entirely in accord with the teachings of genuine Idealism, which sharply distinguishes between these two forms of experience, attributing the former to our own wills, but the latter to a Divine Will, which

out of pure Goodness always operates constantly and in the same way.

Objective
Reality

§ 17. We see, therefore, that whilst the reality of the ideas of our imaginations is purely individual or subjective—"imaginary" money, for example, is quite as good as so-called "real" money, so far as he who imagines is concerned; but it will not satisfy his creditors, for their imaginations are not forming a like product—sense-impressions are, in a manner, universally true; they do, to some extent, inform us of objective truth. Hence, we are justified in postulating the existence of an objective world, which may be termed "material" if one pleases. But, since all experience and knowledge is evidently subjective, *i.e.*, existing only in mind, absolute objectivity is unthinkable. With the postulation of the Divine Mind, however, this difficulty is overcome; and we realise that what we, in our ignorance, call "objective" is really subjective—subjective to, *i.e.*, existing in, the Divine Mind.

Nature as
Divine Ex-
ternality

§ 18. Here also is to be found the answer to the objection that to make reality subjective is to make reality relative. As I have elsewhere remarked, "We may quite correctly speak of the physical

universe as an idea in the mind of God ; but this does not mean that it is in any sense unreal—to be an idea in the Divine Mind is the essence of reality ; nought else is truly real save that which is such. And it is because spirit is what it is, because of our likeness (faint though it may be) to God, that this real physical universe is possible to some extent to us as an ideal construction corresponding to the Divine ideal construction. The ‘ external ’ world we know is the world as it exists in each of our minds ; the real ‘ external ’ world is the world as it exists in the Divine Mind ; in so far, then, as our ideal constructions are like to the Divine do we know Reality ”^s—reality, that is, which is not merely individual, but universal and Divine, in other words, objective reality. Of course, when I speak of the physical universe as an idea in the Divine Mind, this must be understood as an idea which is outspoken or willed forth ; in a word, Nature is to be understood as the Divine Externality. It follows, therefore, that all science—every endeavour to co-ordinate and interpret sense-impressions so as to eliminate the errors of the individual, and arrive at truths universally valid—all genuine science, is an attempt rightly to read the thoughts of God, rightly to understand His Will.

^s *Matter, Spirit and the Cosmos* (Rider, 1910), § 87.

Existence of
God more
sure than that
of other Men

§ 19. Many persons, however, whilst highly desirous of believing in a God, a Being of Infinite Love and Wisdom, the Creator and Sustainer of every finite mind and of that vast and mighty Phenomenon we call "Nature," regard this fond belief as an act of faith rather than as the product of reason. But we have seen how the logic of experience absolutely forces us into this belief, and, indeed, as Berkeley has shown, we have more sure grounds for a belief in the existence of that Infinite Will and Wisdom we call God, than we have for that of finite minds other than our own. He says, "——it is plain that *we cannot know the existence of other spirits otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas by them excited in us.* I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents *like myself*, which accompany them, and concur in their production. Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is *not immediate*, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to *agents or spirits* distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.

"But though there be some things which convince us human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to every one, that those things which are called the works of nature,

that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or dependent on, the wills of men. There is therefore some other spirit that causes them, since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves. . . . But if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of the creation; together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but, above all, the never enough admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites, and passions of animals ; I say if we consider all these things, and at the same time attend to the meaning and import of the attributes, one, eternal, infinitely wise, good, and perfect, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid spirit, *who works all in all, and by whom all things consist.*

“ . . . Hence it is evident, that God is known as certainly and immediately as any other mind or spirit whatsoever, distinct from ourselves. We may even assert, that the existence of God is far more evidently perceived than the existence of men; because the effects of nature are infinitely *more numerous and considerable* than those ascribed to human agents. There is not any one mark that

denotes a man, or effect produced by him, which doth not more strongly evince the being of that Spirit who is the *Author of nature*. For it is evident that in affecting other persons, the will of man hath no other object than barely the *motion of the limbs of his body*; but that such a motion should be attended by, or excite *any idea in the mind of another*, depends wholly on the will of the Creator. He it is who, 'upholding all things by the word of his power,' maintains that intercourse between spirits, whereby they are able to perceive the existence of each other. And yet this pure and clear light, which enlightens everyone, is itself invisible to the greatest part of mankind." ⁹

And even if later in the course of this book the possibility of a more intimate knowledge of God becomes apparent, nevertheless Berkeley's positive conclusions still remain true.

Spiritual
Reality

§ 20. But, it may be asked, cannot Berkeley's objections to the existence of material substance (*i.e.* unthinking substance, existing in itself out of mind) be also advanced against the existence of mind? Indeed, did not Hume thus succeed in disproving the existence of soul and spirit, and in reducing the individual to a mere series of separate sensations or phenomena? To me, however, Hume's

⁹ GEORGE BERKELEY : *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, §§ cxliv. to cxlvii.

arguments seem altogether fallacious. Firstly, we may note that our sensations are connected, as we have seen and as Hume admits, according to those definite rules of order and sequence called the laws of nature. But not only in this way are they connected. If, given every sensation which has ever and will ever exist, we could mark out certain sequences according to these rules, we could also mark out certain other sequences connected by the fact of *memory*. Just as the laws of nature indicate the existence of God, so does memory indicate the existence of the individual spirit ; and for this to be true it is not at all necessary that memory should be capable of recalling the whole past history of the individual, but merely that it should link together every moment of its consciousness with the immediately preceding one, so as to make it possible to trace out the above-mentioned sequence. This memory always does. The sense-impressions I call " mine " are related to one another quite differently from the manner in which they are related to those I call " yours " ; this is just because they are mine, *i.e.*, because they find their unity in one mind or spirit—myself.

It may perhaps be incorrect to say that I have an *idea* of a spirit,¹⁰ and, therefore, of myself as such.

¹⁰ Berkeley admits this, but argues that we have a *notion* of spirit, inasmuch as we know what the word means and that we, as spirits, do exist.

But the fact that I have any idea at all is to me proof of my own existence as a spirit. For even could I doubt my existence, that fact would itself prove my existence as a doubting, *i.e.*, a thinking, being. Descartes was certainly right when he said, "I think, therefore I am"—all the argument in the world, though it may do anything with words, can never destroy this fundamental fact of experience. Descartes conclusively shows that if we make clear knowledge our criterion of truth, whatever we doubt, we can never doubt the fact of our own being.

The Signifi-
cance of
Telepathy

§ 21. But if the individual spirit can have an immediate knowledge of his own existence not derived through ideas of sense, may it not be possible for him to have a like knowledge of other spirits? Berkeley does not allow this; but I think it is necessary to transcend his position, without, however, destroying his system as a foundation upon which to build. If we ask two lovers if they know each other's soul only through each other's bodily actions, will they not tell us Nay, and assert a more interior knowledge? Still, lovers are generally prejudiced folk, so the philosopher has to regard their assertions with a wary eye. On the other hand, the phenomena grouped under the term "Telepathy," and now recognised as facts

by all competent authorities (thanks to the unwearied labours of The Society for Psychical Research), certainly seem to lend some justification to this belief. For here we have the undoubted transmission of ideas from mind to mind without the utilisation of the known organs of sense. It is, of course, true that what are conveyed are *ideas*, so Berkeley's fundamental position is not threatened ; but such ideas appear to be transmitted by a more interior way than that of physical sense. Hence they are not ideas of sensation, though objectively true. Indeed, they seem to be the result of a direct perception by one mind of the ideas of another.

§ 22. Moreover, as Berkeley recognised, besides ideas, we may also have notions of the relations between ideas. Here we seem to touch the very nature of Truth, for objective (*i.e.*, universal) Truth, seems not so much to reside in our sense-impressions as in the relations between them (*vide* § 12). Indeed, either inductive reasoning, whereby we pass from particulars to generals, gaining objective truth from subjective fact, has to be scorned as presumption (which all our growing experience forbids us to do), or else we must admit that experience involves a higher element than ideas of sensation and reproductive imagina-

Ideas :
Spiritual and
Natural

tion. For, in inductive reasoning, the mind is, as it were, enabled, in the light of a higher vision, to leap ahead and to grasp a truth transcending all the particular facts that are given. We may, perhaps, denominate the object of this experience "an idea," or we may prefer Berkeley's term "a notion"—the mere words we use are not of great importance, so long as the meaning is clearly understood;—but in the former case, we must admit the existence of distinct classes or grades of ideas—"discrete" degrees of ideas, to use a very useful term due to Swedenborg. There are ideas which, as it were, are exterior and physical and only inform us of the cortex of spirit; there are others which are more interior, more spiritual, and allow us to penetrate more closely to the core of spirit. A man who is aware of his sensations may be said to know something of the externality of God; but how far more deeply into the knowledge of the Divine Being has the man of science penetrated, who knows and appreciates the laws of nature. And having once admitted a scale of discrete ideas, having once admitted the possibility of penetrating more deeply into the knowledge of God than is possible by the mere observation, without comparison and co-ordination, of the varied phenomena of Nature, who shall state where the process is to end?

§ 23. Now, it is to connote this belief that a more intimate knowledge of God and the spiritual is possible than is given by physical science (*i.e.*, the discovery of natural laws by the co-ordination of the phenomena of sense ¹¹) that the term "Mysticism" is here employed. The word is a very ambiguous one, and some remarks on its diverse applications seem a necessary preliminary to Part II. of this book.

"The modern mystic," writes Mr. H. G. Wells, "is commonly a poor fool, on the verge of entire intellectual disorganisation." That there is a large element of truth in this caustic remark must be admitted. We all know the type of person to whom Mr. Wells refers, whose so-called mysticism consists, say, in visiting a Bond Street palmiste, in frequenting the séances of some spiritistic wonder-worker, and in talking an almost unintelligible jargon composed of all that is bad and stupid and nothing of what is really good and wise in Kabbalism and Buddhism. But surely there has been some misuse of language when the denomination "mystic" is applied not only to this "poor fool," but to

¹¹ By this I do not mean to imply that the method of Mysticism is unscientific, in the sense of not proceeding by the inductive method (since the reverse of this is my belief as concerns the highest Mysticism), but that the experiences dealt with belong to a different order from that of ideas gained through the physical senses.

philosophers of profound wisdom and persons of saintly lives? Surely, to take a modern instance, we do not reckon Maurice Maeterlinck a "poor fool," though he is universally allowed to be a "mystic"? For my part I prefer to use the word "Mysticism" in its nobler, and as I think, truer sense, as connoting, in Dean Inge's fine phrase, "the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as *the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal*;"¹² and not to degrade the word by using it as a synonym for intellectual and moral insanity.

Mysticism as
a Mode of
Life

§ 24. Before proceeding to a discussion of Mysticism in its epistemological aspect, some further remarks are necessary. Mysticism is not primarily or essentially a system of philosophy, but a mode of life. It is a life of devotion to God, Whose presence is everywhere realised. Some mystics, in other directions notably great, have, it must be regretfully admitted, regarded the true life of devotion as necessitating retirement from the world rather than the performance of useful service to humanity. This error, however, should

¹² WILLIAM RALPH INGE, M.A.: *Christian Mysticism* (The Bampton Lectures, 1899), p. 5.

be attributed to the age in which they lived, rather than to their mysticism *per se*. In spirit, and, indeed, frequently, if not always, in practice, the ethics of Mysticism have more sympathy with the Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill than with the life of the cloister. Swedenborg is undoubtedly the best guide here, and he develops his system of altruistic ethics—showing that the noblest, best and happiest life is that which ministers to the permanent happiness of others—with a spiritual insight which Mill lacked.

However, this book is not a work on ethics, and Mysticism as a mode of life is a subject outside our present inquiry. I have called attention to the fact that Mysticism is essentially a mode of life to obviate any misunderstanding that might otherwise be occasioned by my treatment of its less essential epistemological aspect.

One additional remark concerning the scope of my enquiry is needed. I think that, amongst others, certain of the Persian mystics, such as Sadi, Jámí and Jalálu'd-dín Rúmí, and the mystics of the Neo-Platonic school, are very deserving of our attention; but not unduly to prolong the discussion I shall restrict myself to dealing with Christian mystics. Christianity, in the Person of its Founder, supplies the mystic with an object of love and worship and an ideal of attainment,

both definite and worthy in character, such as is completely to be found in no other religious system. Moreover, it is an important feature of Christianity, as is so well pointed out by Sir Oliver Lodge in *The Substance of Faith allied with Science*, "that it recognises as good the connexion between spirit and matter, and emphasises the importance of both, when properly regarded." In virtue of this feature, Christianity, more emphatically than any other religion, tends to produce a well-balanced life and to foster the harmonious development of all the powers of man, both physical and spiritual, thus leading to a sane Mysticism.

PART II
MYSTICISM

PART II

MYSTICISM

§ 25. THE mystic seeks to discover God within the hidden ground of his soul, and to discern the spiritual significance of the things of nature and sensuous experience. He seeks for God and the spiritual, not merely as logical postulates or the necessary hypotheses of a rational theory of the Cosmos, but as actual facts of experience. As Professor Pringle-Pattison remarks : "Mysticism . . . appears in connexion with the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the divine essence or the ultimate reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest. The first is the philosophic side of mysticism ; the second, its religious side . . . The thought that is most intensely present with the mystic is that of a supreme, all-pervading, and indwelling power, in whom all things are one. . . . On the practical side, mysticism maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with this Being of

The Mystic
Quest

beings. . . . God ceases to be an object . . . and becomes an experience." ¹

Now this is possible, the mystics assert, because, as they put it, not only is there a sight of the body, but also a sight of the soul. The soul, if its eyes be opened, can see; and to this sight is God, immanent in man and in nature, most gloriously visible. The outward eye beholds only the things of the physical realm: the inward eye of the purified mystic perceives their spiritual meaning and the hand of the Divine Author of nature everywhere manifest.

The Ration-
ality of
Mysticism

§ 26. The charge that Mysticism is opposed to reason, and that the majority of the mystics have been devotees of irrationality, guided only by their feelings, is an unjust one. It is indeed true that, *e.g.*, certain of the mediæval mystics of the Latin Church were not free from an unhealthy emotionalism, but it is manifestly unfair to blame Mysticism for the faults of a comparatively few mystics. As a matter of fact, it would be more true to say of Mysticism that it is the spirit of reason in religion—

¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th. ed., art. "Mysticism." Though that portion of Prof. Pringle-Pattison's definition which I have quoted above is quite satisfactory, it is only fair to state that Prof. Pringle-Pattison's attitude is hostile to Mysticism. Much of his criticism, however, is directed against what has been termed "the negative way," which is really a perversion of Mysticism.

not, however, a cold, formal rationalism, a thing as much to be deplored as an unhealthy emotionalism, but a spirit of rationality in which the heart joins forces with the head, and the feelings are given due place. The faith of the mystic is not founded upon the statements of other men, but on the facts of his own consciousness; his religion and his reason are indissolubly united, and as Emerson well remarks: "When all is said and done, the rapt saint is found the only logician."² But there is, on the other hand, nothing so alien to the spirit of Mysticism as intellectual pride: the mystic bows his head to the divine revelation and receives with meekness divine instruction, for he knows that God is not divided against Himself, and he realises that reason and revelation are one. His faith in the glorious revelation of the Christ is not based upon the assertions of other men that it is true and divine; and the rationality of his position must be admitted, for the mere force of an assertion is no criterion of its truth, nor does the truth of this revelation depend upon those historical evidences, which, valuable in another way, do not really touch the kernel of the matter. No! the mystic has faith in the revelation of the

² RALPH WALDO EMERSON: *The Method of Nature* (see the edition of Emerson's *The Conduct of Life, Nature and other Essays* in Everyman's Library, edited by Ernest Rhys, p. 41).

Christ, because he experiences its truth in his own soul; with him, faith has become reason and reason is turned into faith. "I will not make a Religion for God: nor suffer any to make a Religion for *me*,"³ wrote Benjamin Whichcote; and this is the humble, yet independent, attitude of every great mystic.

Views of the
"Cambridge
Platonists"

§ 27. Of course, it can well be understood that such an attitude could not comfortably exist within the Latin Church, and it is a matter of historical fact that Rome has never regarded Mysticism with a favourable eye: she has barely tolerated in her fold any Mysticism other than an emasculated variety in which a blind following of so-called "spiritual directors"—men in authority in the Church—is substituted for the belief that the light of God within the mind, manifesting itself in an enlightened reason and a free conscience, is the true guide in the life of the Christian mystic. Ruysbroeck, perhaps, affords an exception to this, and one or two other cases may possibly be instanced. Speaking generally, however, we must look elsewhere for the free spirit of true Mysticism—amongst those early Greek Christian theologians,

³ BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE: *Moral and Religious Aphorisms* (See *The Cambridge Platonists, being Selections from the Writings of Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, and Nathanael Culverwel, with Introduction by E. T. Campagnac, M.A., 1901, p. 67*).

who so advantageously combined the philosophy of Plato with the religion of Christ ; or amongst the later mystics of Protestant times. Possibly, nowhere else (with the exception of the writings of Swedenborg) shall we find the excellency of true Reason, and its perfect harmony with Divine Revelation, so emphasised as in the works of that seventeenth-century school of mystical divines (particularly Whichcote and Smith), called " Latitudinarians " by their opponents, to whom their broad-minded spirit was displeasing, but now generally known as the " Cambridge Platonists." Writes Whichcote to Tuckney, " I oppose not rational to spiritual, for spiritual is most rational";⁴ and again, in his discourse on *The Work of Reason*, he remarks : " Man is not at all settled or confirmed in his Religion, until his Religion is the self-same with the Reason of his Mind ; that when he thinks he speaks Reason, he speaks Religion ; or when he speaks religiously, he speaks reasonably ; and his Religion and Reason is mingled together ; they pass into one Principle ; they are no more two, but one : just as the light in the Air makes one illuminated Sphere ; so Reason and Religion in the Subject, are one principle."⁵ Or as Smith puts it : " It's a fond imagination that Religion should extinguish

⁴ See *The Cambridge Platonists*, p. xxvii.

⁵ *Ib.* p. 55.

Reason ; whenas Religion makes it more illustrious and vigorous ; and they that live most in the exercise of *Religion*, shall find their *Reason* most enlarged." ⁶ Reason, the Cambridge Platonists rightly taught, is the very voice of God in the soul of man, and through it he may attain to a knowledge of Divine Truth. This, however, is not said of the perverted reason of the sinful man who is bound by the things of sense ; but of the genuine reason of the virtuous soul, illumined by the light from the Source of all right Reason. " Reason *discovers* what is Natural ; " writes Whichcote, " and Reason *receives* what is Supernatural." ⁷ Or as Culverwel (another of the same school) writes : " 'Tis God, that *plants Reason*, 'tis he, that *waters* it, 'tis he, that gives it an *increase*." ⁸

John Smith, who greatly developed Whichcote's ideas, and is the clearest and most idealistic thinker of the whole school, definitely identified the purified and enlightened reason with the sight of the soul, and has much of value on this point in his delightful *Discourse concerning the True Way or Method of Attaining to Divine Knowledge*, from which I

⁶ JOHN SMITH : *The Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion* (ib. p. 186).

⁷ BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE : *Moral and Religious Aphorisms* (ib. p. 67).

⁸ NATHANAEL CULVERWEL : *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature* (ib. p. 293).

quote the following passages, since the ideas expressed in them are so essentially true of all genuine Mysticism :—" Were I indeed to define *Divinity*," he writes, " I should rather call it a *Divine life*, then a *Divine science* ; it being something rather to be understood by a *Spiritual sensation*, then by any *Verbal description*, as all things of Sense and Life are best known by Sentient and Vital faculties. . . . Every thing is best known by that which bears a just resemblance and analogie with it : and therefore the Scripture is wont to set forth a *Good life* as the *Prolepsis* and Fundamental principle of *Divine Science*. . . .

" To seek our Divinity meerly in Books and Writings is *to seek the living among the dead* : we doe but in vain seek God many times in these, where his Truth too often is not so much *enshrin'd*, as *entomb'd* : no ; *intra te quære Deum*, seek for God within thine own soul ; he is best discern'd νοερά ἐπαφῇ, as *Plotinus* phraseth it, by an *Intellectual touch* of him : we must see *with our eyes*, and hear *with our ears*, and our hands must handle the word of life, that I may express it in *S. John's* words. Ἔστι καὶ ψυχῆς αἰσθησις τις, The Soul it self hath its sense, as well as the Body : and therefore *David*, when he would teach us how to know what the Divine Goodness is, calls not for *Speculation* but *Sensation*, *Tast* and see how good the

Lord is. That is not the best and truest knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labour and sweat of the Brain, but that which is kindled within us by an heavenly warmth in our Hearts. . . .

“ But how sweet and delicious that Truth is which holy and heaven-born Souls feed upon in their mysterious converses with the Deity, who can tell but they that tast it ? When *Reason* once is raised by the mighty force of the Divine Spirit into a converse with God, it is turn'd into *Sense* : That which before was onely *Faith* well built upon sure Principles, (for such our *Science* may be) now becomes *Vision*. We shall then converse with God $\tau\hat{\omega} \nu\hat{\alpha}$, whereas before we convers'd with him only $\tau\hat{\eta} \delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$, with our *Discursive faculty*, as the *Platonists* were wont to distinguish.”⁹

The Nature
of Intuition

§ 28. “ Mysticism,” wrote the late C. C. Massey, “ is a peculiar vital apprehension of spiritual principles and energies, and of their functional operations in or through man and nature. It claims a certitude analogous to that of sensible experience, and usually designated ‘ intuitional.’ Thought, in whatever province it is exercised, seeks to recover for consciousness the synthesis of its related elements ; ‘ intuition ’ gives this synthesis immediately, and is a direct perception of truth in

⁹ *Ib.* pp. 80, 81 and 93.

an organic and concrete unity.”¹⁰ If we use the term “reason” merely for the method of deductive logic, then it is true that intuition, that is, the sight of the soul, claims to transcend reason as a method of obtaining truth, though not (apart from the fact that deductive logic is necessarily limited by the premises at hand) in its results. In the truer use of the term “reason,” however, as connoting, in Dean Inge’s words, “the logic of the whole personality,” this is not true ; for the real contrast is not between intuition and reason, but between intuition and outward sight, with the logic that is based thereon. Intuition is, indeed, not mere sensuous reason, neither is it irrational feeling, but a synthesis of the highest reason and the highest feeling, in which spiritual truth is experienced as a living fact.

§ 29. That “intuition” is a real power of the soul is not only the assertion of all genuine Mysticism, but is attested by all that is truly valuable in Art, for all genuine Art is the manipulation of the symbols of nature and experience so that their spiritual meaning may be blazoned forth ; and this can be accomplished only in virtue of a perception (whether conscious or sub-conscious)

Intuition
and Art

¹⁰ *Thoughts of a Modern Mystic : a Selection from the Writings of the late C. C. Massey*, edited by Prof. W. F. Barrett, F.R.S. (1909), p. 136.

of this meaning by the artist who manipulates them. To this extent all genuine artists must also be mystics : they must behold the vision—the vision of God in the soul, of the spiritual in the natural ; else they cannot give of the fruits of this vision to humanity at large. As to Wordsworth, so to him who would be true artist, there must come—

“ A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.”

He must experience that “ blessed mood ”—

“ In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.”¹¹

Visions and
The Vision

§ 30. I have spoken of the inward consciousness of spiritual truth given by the intuitive power of the soul as vision, and thus is it rightly denominated as an immediate perception of Divine verity. But

¹¹ From the well-known *Lines composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, 1798.

generally the term "vision" has a somewhat different significance, and is used to denote such experiences as those of Suso, of whom we read that he beheld Mary and her Holy Child and knelt himself in adoration, and of the many other mystics who have claimed to have seen the forms of angelical beings. Such visions may be usefully distinguished from the inward perception of spiritual truth. The desire for the inward enlightenment of the soul, for the guidance of the Spirit in mind and heart, is one of which all must approve and to which all ought to aspire ; but the longing for visions, during this earthly life, of the inhabitants of spiritual realms, or of our Divine Saviour as He appeared on earth,—which is a wish for "form" rather than "substance" with respect to spiritual verity, for externality rather than spirit,—to say nothing of the attempt to produce such visions by artificial means, generally, if not always, proves psychologically disastrous ; and was, as a matter of fact, universally condemned by the great Christian mystics of the past. At the same time, however, I think that no fundamental distinction, no hard and fast line of demarcation should be drawn between the two types of vision as actually experienced. Spontaneous visions of spiritual beings may be as genuine and as much the result of the sight of the soul as the interior perception of

Divine truth, for such visions may be given to man by God, but only when they have a mission of Truth to tell. Truth is still, in itself, one and the same, though it may be expressed in various forms, or in a manner that almost transcends forms, save in the most spiritual sense of the term ; a vision may still be true, and therefore *real*—in an objective sense,—even though expressed in a symbolic manner.

Visions Non-
essential to
Mysticism

§ 31. But this, of course, can by no means be asserted of all such visions. Indeed, the great mystics have always recognised the fact that visions, apparently of spiritual beings, may be quite illusory, and they have never assigned to them any such importance as one would gather from some of the statements of Mysticism's opponents. *Such phenomena, then, whatever their value, are to be classed amongst the non-essentials so far as the claim to the title of mystic is concerned.* The cautious attitude of Fénelon in his *Maxims of the Saints* is largely characteristic of the great Christian mystics. He writes, " In the history of inward experience, we not unfrequently find accounts of individuals whose inward life may properly be characterized as *extraordinary*. They represent themselves as having extraordinary communications ;—dreams, visions, revelations. Without stopping to inquire

whether these inward results arise from an excited and disordered state of the physical system or from God, the important remark to be made here is, that these things, to whatever extent they may exist, *do not constitute holiness.*

“ The principle, which is the life of common Christians in their common fixed state, is the principle which originates and sustains the life of those who are truly ‘ *the pure in heart,*’ namely, the principle of *faith working by love*,—existing, however, in the case of those last mentioned, in a greatly increased degree. . . .

“ Again, the persons who have, or are supposed to have, the visions and other remarkable states to which we have referred, are sometimes disposed to make their own experience, imperfect as it obviously is, the guide of their life, considered as separate from and as above the written law. Great care should be taken against such an error as this. God’s word is our true rule.

“ Nevertheless,” Fénelon continues, “ there is no interpreter of the Divine Word like that of a holy heart ; or, what is the same thing, of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart. If we give ourselves wholly to God, the Comforter will take up His abode with us, and guide us into all that truth which will be necessary for us. Truly holy souls, therefore, continually looking to God for a proper under-

standing of His word, may confidently trust that He will guide them aright. A holy soul, in the exercise of its legitimate powers of interpretation, may deduce important views from the Word of God which would not otherwise be known ; but it cannot add anything to it.”¹²

Subjective
and Objective
Visions

§ 32. Before proceeding further with a discussion of seership, I would remind the reader of the conclusions regarding the nature of “ subjective ” and “ objective ” reality reached in Part I. In accordance with these conclusions, a “ subjective ” vision may be defined as one which is true only for its percipient ; an “ objective ” vision as one which is true universally. The snakes of *delirium tremens* are in the first category (*i.e.*, that of subjective visions), and we rightly say that the dipsomaniac is deluded, because the terrible objects he beholds, although perfectly real for him, are non-existent so far as the normal man is concerned : in other words, they exist only in the mind or imagination of the sufferer. On the other hand, when the Psalmist declares that “ The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof,”¹³ we rightly say, not that he is deluded, but that he is

¹² ARCHBISHOP FÉNELON: *The Maxims of the Saints* (Allenson’s “ Heart and Life ” Booklets, No. 16, pp. 16 and 17).

¹³ PSALM xxiv. verse 1.

inspired ; for his vision is true not only for himself, but for all men who can see aright : it exists not only in his mind but in the Mind of God. Between these two extremes lie visions of every degree of subjectivity and objectivity ; visions, more or less truth-telling, more or less symbolic, in which both elements are blended together in varying proportions. " One must bear in remembrance," says Fiona Macleod, in *Iona*, " that, in spiritual sight, there is symbolic vision as well as actual vision. When Colum . . . hurried forward to minister to an old dying Pict ' who had lived well by the light of nature,' and whose house, condition, and end had been suddenly revealed to him : then we have actual vision. When Aithnê, his mother, dreamed that an angel showed her a garment of so surpassing a loveliness that it was as though woven of flowers and rainbows, and then threw it on high, till its folds expanded and covered every mountain-top from the brows of Connaught to the feet of the Danish Sea, and so revealed to her what manner of son she bore within her womb . . . then we have symbolic vision. And sometimes we have that which partakes of each, as when . . . Colum saw angels standing upon the rocks on the opposite side of the Sound which divides Iona from the Ross of Mull, calling to his soul to cross to them, yet, as

they assembled and beckoned, mysteriously and suddenly restrained, for his hour was not come."

Relativity of
Natural
Experience

§ 33. Now, a man's percepts of the things of the material world depend as much upon his physical sense-organs as upon the things sensed, *i.e.*, there are laws of nature connecting all these phenomena. His percepts depend also upon the conditions under which observation is made. To confine our attention to one sense-organ, say that of sight, we know that the appearance of objects depends very largely upon the condition of the eye, and its sensitiveness to the rays of light, as well as upon the nature of the light in which observation is made. There is no departure from Idealism in asserting this, because, as we have seen, (objective) truth concerning the physical realm resides in the relations between our ideas of sensation rather than in the ideas themselves. We have seen that it is impossible to determine whether my "red" is identical with yours; but in the case of certain persons it is abundantly evident that the red of one is *not* the same as the red of another. Colour-blindness, in one variety of which, red is not distinguished from green, but both appear identical with grey, is a case in point. And this defect is always associated with certain peculiarities in the structure of the eyes of the persons afflicted

with it. But the person suffering from this form of colour-blindness, though he cannot have distinct sense-ideas of red and green, can still be convinced that there is an objectively real relation, and hence distinction, denoted by the words.

§ 34. From facts like these we might, by analogy, conclude that a similar principle of relativity holds good in the case of spiritual perception, spiritual verities appearing different according to the condition of the soul or state of mind of him who perceives. We are not, however, left to depend merely upon analogy for this conclusion ; that it is a fact is in many ways abundantly evident. Thus, both the true scientist and the true artist perceive a fundamental unity or harmony underlying the apparent multiplicity of natural phenomena, and the unity of which they are conscious is essentially one and the same ; but it appears, speaking generally, under quite different forms in the two cases. Or, to take a somewhat different example, we have evidence of the same principle of relativity in spiritual perception, in the fact that, whilst a good man sees moral truth as it really is, *i.e.*, as it exists in the Mind of God, an evil man beholds all spiritual things inverted — to him, falsities appear as truths, and evil things as good and greatly to be desired.

Relativity of
Spiritual
Experience

The Emo-
tional Tem-
perament

§ 35. It will be generally admitted that the emotional type of mind is one exceedingly given to beholding things in a wrong perspective, of tincturing its percepts, as it were, with the colours of its own nature. The emotional type of mind, more than any other, projects itself into the things upon which it gazes, not infrequently distorting and exaggerating certain aspects of the same. Now, it is very largely mystics of a rather emotional type of mind that claim to have experienced visions of angelical beings and other visions of this type : the more purely intellectual mystics do not as a rule assert that they have been vouchsafed experiences of this nature. This is easy to understand, if it be admitted, and I think it must be admitted, that, whilst there is an objective spiritual verity underlying many such visions, their form is largely subjective and derived from the seer's own stock of ideas. This seems to be the most satisfactory theory regarding the nature of the majority of such of these visions as can be called genuine. They possessed a reality for the percipients beyond that which they can have for us ; by which I mean, not that they may not have had their origin in objective spiritual verity, but that the relation between this objective reality and the vision as it actually appeared to the seer was one depending upon his mental nature ; with the result that, in many

cases, the form of such visions is largely symbolical and even fantastically so.

§ 36. There are further considerations, however, ^{Causation and the Metaphysics of Source} which may cause us to place a not inconsiderable number of so-called visions of spiritual beings in what may be termed a lower category. No genuinely idealistic system of philosophy can admit the possibility of physical causation — using the term “ causation ” in its strictest meaning, and not simply as implying mere concomitance in time or place. But that there is apparent causation of this nature, that the things of the spiritual or mental world are not wholly unaffected by the things of the material world, is most evident. It is evident, for example, from the fact of sensation itself. As Berkeley shows us, ideas do not cause one another, they merely succeed one another. Spirit alone is active, and is the cause of ideas, which are passive. The fire is not the *cause* of the burning pain I experience if I plunge my hand into it ; it is merely the sign that I shall experience this pain if I act in this manner. The motion of one body is never the *cause* of the motion of another, though it may be its antecedent. Or, as Swedenborg puts the same truth, “ Whatever exists in the form of an effect proceeds from a cause, that which does not proceed from a cause being separated. Such is

the case with nature ; all the individual and particular objects belonging to it are effects from a cause, which is prior, interior, and superior to it, and which proceeds immediately from God. For since there exists a spiritual world, which is prior, interior, and superior to the natural world, therefore all that belongs to the former is cause, and all that belongs to the latter is effect. The existence indeed of one thing from another is also progressive in the natural world, but this is by means of causes proceeding from the spiritual world ; for where the cause of an effect is, there also is to be found the cause of an efficient effect. For every effect becomes an efficient cause in successive order, even to the ultimate, where the effective force stops. But this is continually accomplished from the Spiritual in which alone this force exists ; this therefore is the reason why nothing in nature exists except from the Spiritual, and by means of it.”¹⁴ We see, therefore, that, although all causation is by and from the spiritual, yet, since natural phenomena always succeed one another in definite and fixed orders, since they are progressive, they exhibit a semblance of causation. Indeed, for the purely practical purposes of science and daily life, as distinguished from the needs of Metaphysics,

¹⁴ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG : *God, Providence, Creation* (trans. by I. Tansley, 1902), § 94.

we may speak of one phenomenon as the cause of another. J. S. Mill, for example, defined the "cause" of a phenomenon as those phenomena which are always and unconditionally observed to precede it;¹⁵ and it is in this sense that the word is generally employed in scientific text-books. There is no harm in this, so long as it is borne in mind that the word "cause" thus defined has quite a different meaning from its metaphysical one of "source," which is based upon our consciousness of will and our felt power to produce effects in the external world. Mill, with his usual care and logic, called attention to this, and stated that what he was dealing with were "physical" and not "efficient causes"; unfortunately, however, this most important distinction is often lost sight of, and unfortunately also, Mill denied the doctrine that volition is an "efficient cause," and sought to bring the phenomena of will and desire under the category of "physical causation." The fact of Purpose, however,—the existence of the effect in the realm of Imagination before its existence in that of Nature, or sensation,—serves sharply to distinguish between the relation of volition to its effect, and that of a "physical cause" ("invariably and unconditionally antecedent phe-

¹⁵ See the Section on the "Law of Universal Causation" in his *System of Logic*.

nomenon ") to its " effect " (or, rather, " consequent "), and it is to the existence of Purpose that the first relation owes its epistemologically satisfactory nature. Only when the end or purpose has been discovered can the mind rest from its search, and since the concept of End or Purpose has no meaning as applied to " physical causation," the mind is compelled to postulate an " efficient cause "—a Will—behind every process of " physical causation."

Asceticism
and its
Dangers

§ 37. As concerns the causation of sensation, Swedenborg maintains that there is influx from the spiritual to the natural, from which the latter derives its existence, but not conversely. In man, who has no life or truth in himself, but is a recipient of life and truth from God, this influx is modified according to the condition of the sense-organs; and thus arises sensation. Indeed, it is most evident that, whilst incarnated, our natural bodies are not negligible factors in our spiritual lives; and I venture to suggest that it will be nowise a departure from a sane Idealism, to maintain that an unhealthy and unnatural condition of the physical body is very liable to give rise to visions of an entirely delusive nature. That many recorded experiences of alleged appearances of spiritual beings were of this type is a fact that was by no

means unrecognised by the great mystics of the past. As to asceticism,¹⁶ it must suffice here to remark: (i.) That it was largely practised in an extreme form by many of the mediæval mystics of the Latin Church (e.g., Suso); (ii.) That since (like the opposite evil, viz., debauchery) it is contrary to Nature, which true Mysticism declares is the expression and manifestation of the Divine Mind, it must inevitably result in unhealthiness and an unnatural state of the physical man:—two facts which warn us to be extremely cautious of setting too high a value upon the visions of many of the Roman Catholic mystics. And, of course, the same caution is necessary in dealing with the alleged visions of other mystics, such as those of the East, given to extremes of asceticism.

§ 38. Moreover, in discussing this question we must take into account the workings of the sub-conscious self. There cannot, I think, be much doubt that many of the so-called visions and auditions of modern clairvoyants and clairaudients (that is, of those who are not in the category of deliberate cheats and impostors) are merely the

The Sub-conscious
Self and its
Products

¹⁶ For some further remarks by the present writer on this subject see a short article in *Morning Light* for August, 1910 (Vol. xxxiii., pp. 330–332), entitled “On Pleasure and Asceticism.”

products of their subconscious selves ; and no doubt the same holds good of some of the visions of the mystics of the past. Of course, it may be said that all visions are the products of the subconscious self, the sight of the soul being a " faculty " of that self. My present reference, however, is not to visions arising through the perception of objective spiritual verity by means of a subconscious power, but to those pseudo-visions whose whole substance, as well as their form, is derived from the subconscious self. A modern case of this sort is recorded in a book published in 1909 under the title of *The Maniac*, a work purporting to be a study of acute mania from the standpoint of the sufferer — a woman-journalist in this case. The voices which she heard, and which she treated as emanating from spirits other than herself, were, as she realised upon her recovery, due to fragments of her own subconscious self which had acquired personalities of their own—the result : dissociation of personality, that is, madness. The case of August Strindberg may also be mentioned here. He did not claim to see visions, but at a certain period in his life natural objects began to take on a new and, as it seemed, prophetic meaning to him. Coincidences were always occurring, seemingly to direct his life, and whose suggestions he always followed ; until he found himself the victim of

paranoia (persecutory mania).¹⁷ Indeed, the chronicles of madness are full of such cases, which warn us to be careful in dealing with this subject.

§ 39. But after making all due allowances for the factors which produce delusion, there does remain a by no means unimportant residuum of cases which prove that to some souls have been vouchsafed visions of angelic beings (*i.e.*, "the spirits of just men made perfect") and of the spiritual world: and the materialistic contention that all such experiences have their origin in disease either of mind or body is as untenable as the credulous belief that none are of this nature.

Conclusions
as to the
Value of
Visions

§ 40. The seership of Jacob Boehme, the inspired shoemaker of Goerlitz, calls for special mention. Boehme claimed, not to have beheld and conversed with spirits or angels, but to have seen into the inmosts of Nature. He tells us that he never desired that any such mighty mysteries should be revealed to him; but "as it is the condition of poor laymen in their simplicity," he writes, "I sought only after the heart of Jesus

The Testi-
mony of
Jacob
Boehme

¹⁷ See in particular his *The Inferno* (trans. by C. Field, 1912). Strindberg himself attributed his recovery from madness to Swedenborg, whose works he read in his latter days. He interpreted some of Swedenborg's doctrines, however, in a rather unusual manner.

Christ . . . and I besought the Lord earnestly for His holy spirit, and His grace, that He would be pleased to bless and guide me in Him ; and take that away from me, which did turn me away from Him, and I resigned myself wholly to Him, that I might not live to my own will, but to His ; and that He only might lead and direct me : to the end, that I might be His child in His Son Jesus Christ.

“ In this my earnest Christian seeking and desire,” he continues, “ the gate was opened unto me, that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an University ; at which I did exceedingly admire, and I knew not how it happened to me ; and thereupon I turned my heart to praise God for it.

“ For I saw and knew the Being of all Beings, the Byss (the ground or original foundation), and Abyss (that which is without ground, or bottomless and fathomless) ; also the birth [or eternal generation] of the holy Trinity ; the descent, and original of this world, and of all creatures, through the divine wisdom ; I knew and saw in myself all the three worlds ; namely, the divine, angelical, and paradisical [world] and then the dark world ; being the original of nature to the fire : And then thirdly, the external, and visible world, being a procreation, or extern birth ; or as a substance

expressed, or spoken forth, from both the internal and spiritual worlds ; and I saw, and knew the whole Being [or working essence] in the evil, and in the good ; and the mutual original, and existence of each of them ; and likewise how the pregnant mother (genetrix or fruitful bearing womb of eternity) brought forth, so that I did not only greatly wonder at it, but did also exceedingly rejoice.

“ And presently it came powerfully into my mind to set the same down in writing, for a memorial to myself ; albeit I could very hardly apprehend the same in my external man, and express it with the pen ; yet however I must begin to labour in these great Mysteries as a child that goeth to school : I saw it (as in a great deep) in the internal, for I had a thorough view of the universe as in a CHAOS, wherein all things are couched and wrapped up, but it was impossible for me to explicate and unfold the same.

“ Yet it opened itself in me from time to time, as in a young plant : albeit the same was with me for the space of twelve years, and I was as it were pregnant (or breeding of it) with all, and found a powerful driving and instigation within me, before I could bring it forth into an external form of writing ; which afterward fell upon me as a sudden shower, which hitteth whatsoever it lighteth upon ;

just so it happened to me, whatsoever I could apprehend, and bring into the external [principle of my mind] the same I wrote down.

“ However, afterward the sun did shine on me a good while, but not in a continual constant manner ; for when the same did hide itself, I scarce knew, or well understood my own labour [or writing] so that, man must acknowledge that his knowledge is not his own, or from himself, but God’s and from God ; and that God knoweth [or manifests the ideas of His wisdom] in the soul of man after what manner and measure He pleaseth.”¹⁸

Discussion of
Boehme’s
Seership

§ 41. That a subjective element entered largely into Boehme’s visions seems evident from the form in which they are expressed in his works, which borders at times upon the fantastical ; though it might be argued that they were not, perhaps, actually experienced in this form, but merely expressed therein afterwards—certainly, the inspired shoemaker, as he himself tells us in the passage already quoted, experienced great difficulty in giving his experiences outward expression. Boehme was of an emotional temperament, much given to rhapsodising, and in spite of the many most precious jewels of thought and feeling

¹⁸ JACOB BOEHME : *Epistles* (J. E.’s translation, Epistle II., §§ 6-11, 1886 reprint, pp. 29 and 30).

to be found in his works, there is also a not inconsiderable quantity of what may be termed clay. But after all has been said that can justly be said in criticism of Boehme, the fact remains that his works do contain these jewels, and that from an uneducated cobbler, Boehme became one of the greatest and most spiritual exponents of Christian Mysticism of his own or any other day. That he did experience an inward spiritual enlightenment and that his visions did involve a valuable element of objective spiritual verity, seem beyond reasonable doubt.

§ 42. The case of Emanuel Swedenborg is, in many respects, even more remarkable and of even greater importance. I have said that most of the mystics who claimed to have experienced visions of spiritual beings were of a rather emotional type of mind : the seership of Sweden's great mystic-philosopher constitutes a striking exception to this usually valid generalisation. Like Boehme, Swedenborg¹⁹ did not seek for visions of spiritual beings, and like him also, he had from his earliest age a profound faith in the Christian religion as he then understood it. But unlike Boehme, he was of

The Testi-
mony of
Emanuel
Swedenborg

¹⁹ The humility of both Boehme and Swedenborg, their entire lack of intellectual pride, is a further point of resemblance well worth noticing.

an intellectual type of mind, a practical scientist and a practical politician, with a European reputation for his learning. Ardently he sought for the soul analytically, hoping to discover it by physiological investigations—until the vision came, and he laid aside this work for a still higher calling. Other seers have claimed to have experienced more or less brief and fleeting visions of things spiritual : Swedenborg asserts that his spiritual sight was opened by God, and that he enjoyed constant communication with the spiritual realm—with devils as well as angels—during the space of many years, whilst in full possession of those keen mental powers which warrant us to say of him, that no type of mind could be imagined better qualified to see things in a right perspective. Together with these “outward” visions came also the inward spiritual enlightenment of his mind, whereby their meaning became plain to him. Thus, in his work on *Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell*, he writes, “ . . . it has been granted me to associate with angels and to talk with them as one man with another ; and also to see what exists in the heavens and in the hells, and this for thirteen years ; and to describe them from the evidence of my own eyes and ears in the hope that ignorance may be enlightened, and unbelief dispelled.”²⁰ Elsewhere

²⁰ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG : *Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell*, § 1 (edition in Everyman's Library, trans. by F. Bayley).

he says, “. . . the Lord manifested himself before me his servant . . . and afterwards opened the sight of my spirit, and so let me into the spiritual world, permitting me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to converse with angels and spirits, and this now continually for many years, I attest in truth.”²¹ And of the *doctrines* of the New Church which was to be established—the Church consisting in the mystic union of those who worship the Lord God in spirit and truth, who walk in the paths of righteousness, seeking, not for self, but for the good of others—he writes in the same place: “I have never received anything relating to the *doctrines* of that church from any angel, but from the Lord alone, while I was reading the Word.” Swedenborg most vividly realised that momentous truth, which he so often explicitly teaches, that all Good and all Truth are of God and from God alone. No man can speak that which is true, nor do that which is good, unless, in the very widest and grandest meaning of the word, he is inspired from the Divine Source of all good and truth.

§ 43. All systems of philosophy, as Professor Empiricism and Rationalism James pointed out, can be broadly divided into two

²¹ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG: *The True Christian Religion*, § 779.

groups, the rationalistic and the empirical. The term "rationalistic" is not, perhaps, a very happy one, but it is here used to denote those systems which are based upon "principles" and constructed by means of *a priori* reasoning, whereas the empirical systems are those which are based upon facts and constructed by means of *a posteriori* reasoning. The former systems have generally been associated with religion and what Professor James calls "tender-mindedness"; the latter with irreligion and "tough-mindedness." But as Professor James indicates, it were a good thing if Religion and Empiricism could be combined. This combination seems actually to have been effected in the case of the mystics.

Superstition,
Science and
Philosophy
as Forms of
Empiricism

§ 44. Certainly, those systems of philosophy which attempt to evolve the whole Cosmos out of bare thought, and give experience second place, seem very unsatisfactory. But, on the other hand, there is empiricism *and* empiricism. There is an empiricism which just blindly accepts the crude facts of experience, never trying to discover the relations between them or to understand their meanings. To some extent this criticism holds good of what is called Common Sense. Common Sense does, indeed, seek to generalise experience

and to be guided by the results of such generalisations, but it does so hastily ; and it may quite easily degenerate into Superstition, *i.e.*, the supposition that events are connected which are not connected in the manner supposed. Thus, no one, presumably, believes that to spill salt will entail bad fortune, unless he has once observed bad luck to follow the spilling of salt, or has it on the authority of someone whose word he trusts, that this has actually been observed. Consequently, inasmuch as his superstitious belief is based upon experience, he may be termed an empiricist. But he is a very poor empiricist. Otherwise he would interrogate experience again ; either by spilling salt and observing the result in his own case, or else by carefully noting what happened when other persons spilled salt. This is, indeed, just the difference between the empiricism of common sense and scientific empiricism : Science does not accept experience at face value, but experiments, in order to eliminate all adventitious elements, and to gain a knowledge of the true relations between facts. There is, moreover, a still higher form of empiricism ; rational empiricism, if I may so call it—an empiricism which has joined hands with rationalism and become assimilated therewith. This, at least, is what I understand by Philosophy :—an examination of experience in order to get at its Source, to

understand its purpose, in a word, to make plain its Spiritual Meaning.

Mysticism
as Religious
Empiricism

§ 45. Mysticism may be regarded, as I have suggested above, as empiricism applied to religious experience. But it must be confessed that the empiricism of the majority of mystics seems to be largely that of the merely "common sense" order. They accept the experiences vouchsafed to them in thankfulness and wonder, but their very awe and delight prevent them from examining such experiences in a scientific and rational manner. With Swedenborg, however, the case is different. His early scientific and philosophical training enabled him coolly and critically to analyse his experiences, and to bring to bear upon them his knowledge of scientific and philosophical method. This coolness, this spirit of scientific detachment, causes many readers to dislike his books ; but philosophically considered, it is one of Swedenborg's most valuable characteristics ; for it enabled him, so it seems to me, to formulate for the first time a philosophy of the spiritual, based not on speculation, but on experience ; a system at once empirical and rational.

PART III

THE NATURE AND CRITERIA OF TRUTH

PART III

THE NATURE AND CRITERIA OF TRUTH

§ 46. THAT which is, is true. Hence absolute truth, truth in its entirety and unity, is coextensive with the whole of existence. To us who can perceive only a part of things, who cannot altogether escape from ourselves and see the whole Cosmos as it is from every point of view at once, absolute truth is unknown and unknowable. We can, with an effort, bring ourselves sometimes to see things from the view-point of others ; but we never wholly succeed in this, because our sight is our own ; and even were we to do so, we should still be regarding things from an individual view-point. The knowledge of absolute truth belongs to God alone Who, immanent in all things, can perceive all things from every point of view at once, and as Cause of all things good (that is of all real existence, since evil exists only negatively, as a defect in, or perversion of, that which otherwise is or would be good) is the Fountain of all truth. Truth, then, is the form of all real existence, that is, the mode of manifestation of God. Put more briefly, it is the form of good or love.

Absolute
Truth Un-
knowable

Although we can never gain a knowledge of truth in its entirety and unity, we may catch many glimpses of its splendour, and just as a mathematical series may for ever progress towards some limit which it never reaches, or just as a hyperbola on production continually approaches but never meets its asymptotes, so may we for ever progress towards, but never gain, a knowledge of absolute truth. We may, indeed, know truths relating to the absolute, for all truths concerning truth are of this nature ; but this is not the same thing as to know absolute truth.

Mathematical
Illustrations:
(i.) Convergent Series

§ 47. As the notion of asymptotic approach referred to above will probably be a new one to readers who have not studied mathematics, and since it seems a very useful one in connection with the question of man's progress towards a knowledge of absolute truth, some further remarks on it may not here be out of place.

Mathematics acquaints us with numerous series of quantities—in which each term is formed from the preceding by some fixed law or rule—which possess this remarkable property : that by taking a sufficient number of terms and adding them together, we can obtain a quantity which shall differ from a certain quantity, depending on the nature of the series, by as little as we please; but

however many terms we may take and add together, the result will always fall short of this latter quantity. Thus, considering the series as a progression, its sum continually approaches, but never actually coincides with, some fixed quantity depending on the nature of the series.

Recurring decimals afford an example of such series. Thus :—

$$\begin{aligned} .3 &= \frac{3}{10} \text{ or } \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{30}, & .333 &= \frac{333}{1000} \text{ or } \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{300}, \\ .33 &= \frac{33}{100} \text{ or } \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{30}, & .3333 &= \frac{3333}{10000} \text{ or } \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{3000}, \end{aligned}$$

and so on. Consequently, the more terms we take of the recurring decimal $\dot{3}$, that is, of the infinite series $\frac{3}{10} + \frac{3}{100} + \frac{3}{1000} + \frac{3}{10000} + \dots$, and add them together, the more nearly does the result approach $\frac{1}{3}$. But, however many terms we take, their sum is never quite $\frac{1}{3}$: it is always just a little less.

So may man's knowledge continually approach to, but never reach, that of absolute truth. And that this is necessary to his happiness is evident from the fact that happiness is the product of felt progress, and if progress terminate, however it may terminate, happiness can no longer result.

§ 48. It may be argued, however, that the series mentioned above is not really analogous to man's progress in a knowledge of truth, because

Mathematical
Illustrations :
(ii.) Divergent Series

each term is *less* than that preceding it, the rate of the progress of the sum of the series being a decreasing one ; whereas in the case of man's knowledge of truth, the rate of progress is an increasing one, each stage showing more truth gained than during any preceding one of the same duration. But this difference is because the goal towards which man's knowledge of truth continually advances, but never reaches, is, not a finite, but an infinite one. Now, all series in which succeeding terms are greater than preceding are divergent, *i.e.*, there is no finite quantity which their sum cannot be made to exceed by taking a sufficient number of terms. Thus, consider the series :—

$$1, 2, 4, 8, 16 \dots$$

By adding together a sufficient number of its terms, each of which is twice that of the preceding, we can obtain a quantity greater than any finite quantity we please. Thus to exceed 100 we must take seven terms, and to exceed 1000 we must take ten. But, on the other hand, however many terms we do take and add together, it is always possible to conceive of a quantity greater than this result. Thus, however many terms we do take, their sum is never infinite. And the same statement holds good of series in which each term is not merely twice that

of the preceding one, but even a hundred, a thousand, or any finite number of times, as great. So with man's knowledge of truth, it may for ever increase, and its rate of increase may for ever increase, yet never does it become a knowledge of absolute (*i.e.*, infinite) truth.

§ 49. A similar phenomenon of asymptotic approach is exhibited by certain curves, which progress according to fixed rules or laws. The hyperbola (see page 91) is one of the simplest cases. The hyperbola shown in the diagram is constructed according to the following rule. Two straight lines, which are to be the asymptotes of the hyperbola, *i.e.*, the lines which it continually approaches, but never meets, are drawn at right angles to one another. Let the point where they cut be called "O." Then, if any distance be measured in inches from O along either asymptote, the perpendicular distance of this point from the hyperbola is, also measured in inches, the reciprocal¹ of the first measurement. Thus OM is 3 inches, PM is $\frac{1}{3}$ inch. It is evident, therefore, that the hyperbola will never meet its asymptotes,

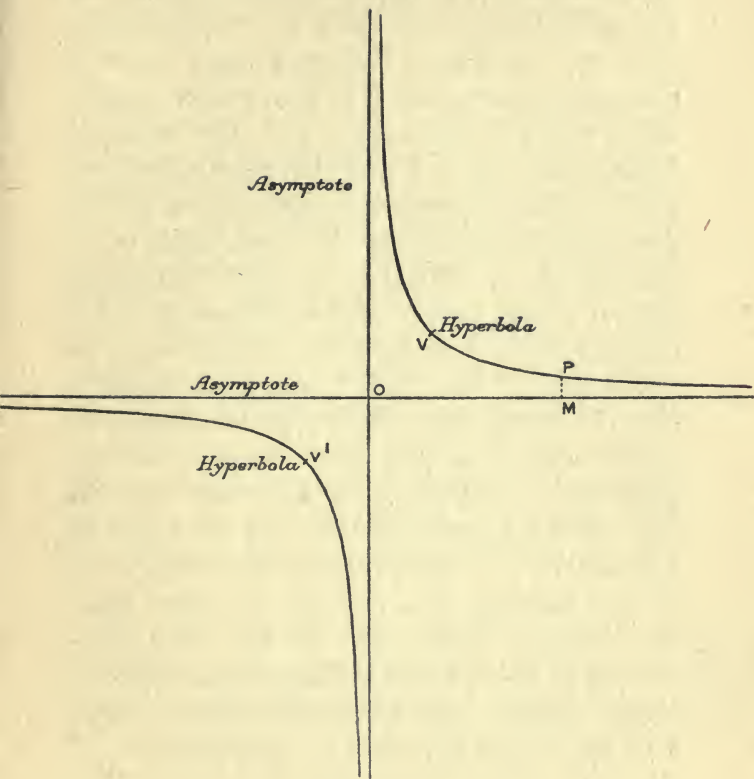
Mathematical
Illustrations :
(iii.) The
Hyperbola

¹ The reciprocal of a fraction is obtained by interchanging its numerator and denominator. Thus, $\frac{3}{4}$ (or $1\frac{1}{4}$) is the reciprocal of $\frac{4}{3}$. All integral (or whole) numbers may be considered as fractions with denominator 1. Thus, 3 may be written $\frac{3}{1}$, so that its reciprocal is $\frac{1}{3}$.

although by producing it, we can make it approach as near to them as we please. Thus if we continued curve and asymptote 10 feet (= 120 inches) from O, the distance between the two would be only $\frac{1}{120}$ inch. The two asymptotes may be regarded as representing absolute truth, and the hyperbola as man's gradual approximation thereto. The analogy may be further extended if, adopting a system of symbolism I suggested in *A Mathematical Theory of Spirit* (1912), we regard the horizontal asymptote as representing the totality of natural truth, the vertical asymptote as representing the totality of spiritual truth. We may consider man's knowledge as commencing at either vertex of the hyperbola (V, V' on page 91), the vertices being the points which are furthest removed from the asymptotes. In the case of a man who cultivates a knowledge of both natural and spiritual truth, *i.e.*, the genuine philosopher, we may imagine his consciousness as gradually flowing from V or V' along the hyperbola in both directions, though possibly at different rates. But in the case of one who concerned himself only with natural science, the vertical flow would not take place.

All Natural
Laws Ap-
proximate

§ 50. All measurement involves some error, however accurately it may be carried out; thus, if one measures a distance with a ruler graduated



HYPERBOLA AND ASYMPTOTES.

(All measurements reduced $\frac{1}{2}$.)

in hundredths of an inch, it is possible that the measurement may be as much as five-thousandths of an inch too great or too little ; and if one uses some special instrument (e.g., a micrometer gauge), which will give thousandths and even tenths of thousandths of an inch correctly, the measurement still falls short of absolute accuracy, and may be as much as five hundredths of a thousandth of an inch too great or too little. So small a quantity as this, of course, has no practical meaning, but it certainly has a significance for the philosophy of the Absolute. For if all measurement involves error, be it only extremely slight, all natural laws which express the quantitative relations between phenomena are approximate only, and thus fall short of being absolutely true. As the degree of approximation is improved, so the statement of the law becomes more complex and more terms are involved. Thus, take the law, partly discovered by Boyle, partly by Gay-Lussac, concerning the pressure, temperature and volume of a gas, This law may be expressed by the formula—

$$PV=RT$$

—where P is the pressure, V the volume, T the absolute temperature (*i.e.*, temperature in degrees Centigrade, plus 273° C.), and R a constant quantity. This law is very simple. It holds good with

fair accuracy of most gases, but of none is it absolutely true. Van der Waal's equation—

$$(P + \frac{a}{V^2}) (V - b) = RT$$

—in which two new terms, a and b are introduced, depending upon the nature of the gas, is more accurate than the simpler equation $PV=RT$; but even van der Waal's equation is no more than an approximation, and of no gas does it hold with absolute accuracy. No doubt a more accurate equation could be obtained by introducing more terms, and so on, *ad infinitum*. An equation representing the relation between any two phenomena with absolute accuracy would involve infinite terms, and thus the whole of existence. It appears, therefore, that every fact involves something of the infinite in it, and is thus not completely explicable.

§ 51. Nor are the truths of Mathematics, as some think, exempt from the charge of being only approximations, and not absolute; though, indeed, I freely admit that they are approximations of an exceptionally high order of accuracy. There is, for instance, as Riemann and Lobachewski have shown, no logical reason why the sum of the three angles of a triangle should be exactly equal to two right angles; for Euclid's proof of this proposition is based upon a supposition as to the nature of

This Statement also True of the Laws of Mathematics

parallel straight lines which really assumes its truth (see below, § 55). It is true, indeed, that the most accurate measurements that have been carried out have never shown any deviation of the sum of the angles of a triangle from two right angles ; so that for scientific purposes we should treat Euclid's proposition as true.² But for the purposes of philosophical speculation it must be remembered that a deviation of the sum of these angles from two right angles may exist, though smaller in magnitude than the smallest angular differences that the most accurate instruments yet constructed by man are capable of measuring.

All Know-
ledge of
Truth Given
by Inspira-
tion

§ 52. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that every glimpse we have of truth is the gift of God, for since all truth is of and from God, truths become man's only in virtue of Divine Revelation, whether consciously perceived as such, or not. There can be absolutely no knowledge of truth (whether relating to the world of nature or to that of spirit) which is not of this origin. Of course, I am using the expression "divine revelation" in its widest (and truest) sense, and not limiting it to any special experiences. For, accurately speaking, every experience that makes for goodness and truth is a

² See the Preface to the present writer's *Experimental Mensuration* (Heinemann, 1912).

divine revelation. Rationality (or reason, if that term is used in the wide meaning given to it in § 28, as I intend doing in what follows)—rationality is the inner ear God has given man whereby he may hear His Voice ; and God speaks most eloquently to man, both through nature, or the world of outer experience, and through the heart, or world of inner experience.³

It follows, therefore, that the distinction between revelation and discovery is largely a verbal one. The two terms merely refer to the same process regarded from different points of view : not (as is commonly supposed) to two different processes or modes in which man gains a knowledge of truth. A truth to become man's must be given by God and received by man ; it must, therefore, be both revealed and discovered. That it must be revealed has been shown already : that it must be discovered is evident from the fact that no truth can be known to man unless it be rationally apprehended. A truth cannot carry a divine warrant external to itself. Its rationality is its divine warrant. If I am irrational I may judge it not to be true ; but to an irrational person a knowledge of

³ I have not mentioned the Bible in the above passage as a specific form of God's revelation to man, because the truths of the Bible only become man's in virtue of that inner experience which has already been mentioned. Something more will be said on this point later.

truth is not possible. Thus rationality or reason is the sole criterion of truth : a statement is true if it is rational ; it is not true if it is irrational.

Induction

§ 53. The criterion of rationality, however, permits of discussion under three main heads, and we may, therefore, speak of three criteria, any or all of which (preferably all, where possible) may be employed in judging of the truth of any statement : the inductive, the deductive, and the pragmatic. All three criteria involve the appeal to experience, which, as the form of revelation, is, rationally interpreted, the final test of truth. Induction, however, is *par excellence* the appeal to experience, that is, let it be repeated, to revelation from God. Experience is the basis of discovery. We know, however, that experience is not free from error : one's experiences reflect one's faults. This is inevitable, for man can observe things only through his own senses and from one standpoint at once. To obviate the errors thus arising in observations relating to the physical realm, men of science employ instruments to supplement and correct the sense-impressions of the observer, and one experience is compared with another, so that the various elements of error in each may be eliminated and the common element of truth obtained. This is the business of Science.

We should commit a fatal error, however, if we availed ourselves only of experience gained by the outer senses : there is an inner experience of the heart and mind, by which is revealed the true spiritual significance of the symbols of which this world consists. I mean the vision of the poet, rather than the extraordinary experiences of the psychic. As we have seen, the visions of the psychic, though always of interest and importance to the science of psychology, may be anything other than spiritual. The vision of the poet, which is spiritual vision, is free to all. Only it is necessary that we clarify our inner sight by the purification of our inner selves, lest we be misled by the false visions of evil desires.

§ 54. The spiritual message of the Bible is manifest to the inner sight, in so far as it is purified and educated to receive it. If the Bible were a text-book of history or physical science it would be right to apply to it the criteria of history or physical science, which are inductive criteria based on sensuous experience. But the Bible is of an entirely different nature from this. It is of spiritual import and meaning, and the inductive criterion of the inner experience of the heart and mind proclaims it to be the Word of God. That, at least, is the unanimous testimony of the great

The Bible as
a Source of
Truth

Christian mystics. And Swedenborg's doctrine of Correspondences, according to which every natural object is the symbol of some spiritual verity to which it bears a functional analogy, renders this view of the Bible the more sure. For this doctrine makes plain the true structure of the Bible, and explains its felt spiritual worth by showing how, in the Bible, historical and other natural ideas are utilised symbolically to express spiritual and divine verities concerning God and the soul.

Deduction

§ 55. Deduction is the appeal to the principle of the unity of Truth. Nothing can really be discovered by deductive reasoning, for all that is contained in the conclusion of a syllogism is necessarily contained in its premises. In deductive reasoning the mind does not, as in inductive reasoning, take a leap beyond what is given and gain a higher vision and a more comprehensive truth. The whole of Euclid's Geometry, for example, is really contained in his fundamental suppositions. But deduction does enable us to behold a truth in all its fulness and beauty, to behold within it depths undreamt of: were it not for Euclid's deductive system of Geometry, who would dream one-half of what his fundamental suppositions contain? This is very near akin to discovery.

Deduction enables us to compare a supposition with a truth related to it, whereby, being sure of the essential unity of truth, we may judge as to the validity of this supposition according to its harmony or disharmony with what we already know to be true. Deduction, therefore, enables us to avail ourselves of the results of the experience of others. Valuable though one's own experience is to oneself, and this is not less true in religion than in other matters, man would never have progressed in knowledge were it not for the fact that experience and its results may be stored up, so to speak, in tradition and in books, and handed on from generation to generation.

§ 56. A blind faith is no faith, whether in Faith and
Sight Science or Religion. Man is a rational creature, and in virtue of his rationality can see what is true. The surest truth is not gained by argument but by sight—spiritual or rational sight. “Truth,” said the mystic-poet Blake, “can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ’d.” If this be true, still more emphatically is it true that man cannot be forced (as distinguished from rationally led) into a knowledge of truth. A belief in certain doctrines forced on the mind by means of miracles or marvellous occurrences may be necessary in a certain stage of man's intellectual evolution, but

it does not result in that real knowledge of truth which is essential to a true faith. It is good for the child to learn everything from its own experience, as far as possible. But this is not completely possible : there are certain facts which, for the time being, it must accept on the authority of its parents (miracle-workers in its sight). It cannot, however, be said really *to know* these truths, unless, and until, either it shall have experienced them for itself, or the logical connection of these truths with other facts of its experience shall have been made plain. Then its belief ceases to rest on authority, and becomes grounded in the rational interpretation of experience.

Sweden-
borg's Atti-
tude

§ 57. The necessity of rational conviction for true faith is a point much emphasised in the philosophy of Swedenborg. And it was on this account that the Swedish seer, although claiming to be in constant communication with the spiritual world for many years, disliked to give any outward sign of the fact of this communication, lest it should force any one to accept his doctrines without understanding them. For Swedenborg's philosophy and theology are rational. It is this which so markedly distinguishes his system from those of others claiming supernormal experiences, rendering it of so great a significance for modern philosophy, whereas

systems based on authority are of psychological interest only. He was enabled to apply the rational (or scientific) method to experience of the spiritual, and thus to place the philosophy of the spiritual on a firm basis. And in virtue of the correspondential relationship between matter and spirit, the results of this experience could be brought into relation with the results of the experience gained through contact with this world of nature, and thus so expressed as to be rationally apperceptible by those who are grounded in this latter form of experience. This does, indeed, constitute a divine revelation, like every other discovery, though truly of exceptional magnitude and importance. Whatever outward evidences⁴ there may be that Swedenborg's claim is valid, the final proof is to be found in the essential rationality of the system he has propounded, in an irresistible appeal to heart and mind. Beyond its rationality it has no warrants, for to speak of a warrant transcending the rationality of truth is to formulate a contradiction in terms.

§ 58. There is an old fallacy, according to which our reason, being finite, is unable to exercise judgment. The Universality of Reason

⁴ For these evidences, which are very interesting and important in their way, see the Appendices to E. F. Goerwitz's translation of Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, edited by Frank Sewall, 1900.

ment in matters relating to the infinite, and whether or not of any use in dealing with purely physical science, ought to be laid aside when we come to religion. But if we are to lay reason aside and submit to authority, which authority shall we choose as that alone which will instruct us in right knowledge? Every sect claims authority, and if one does so more loudly than the others, is that any evidence of the validity of its claim? But to speak of reason as something individual and, therefore, defective, is to misunderstand the nature of reason. Reason is everywhere one and the same. It is not something which is the product of imperfect man: as we have seen, it is rather the gift of God. To be reasonable is really to transcend oneself; it is to lay aside all that pertains to self in the bad sense of this word; to desire, not that this theory shall be true and that false, but only that truth may be gained. As John Locke says, "He that would acquit himself . . . as a lover of truth, not giving way to any preoccupation or bias that may mislead him, must . . . not be in love with any opinion, or wish it to be true, till he knows it to be so, and then he will not need to wish it: for nothing that is false can deserve our good wishes, nor a desire that it should have the place and force of truth; and yet nothing is more frequent than

this.”⁵ Thus, to be truly reasonable is to lay aside self-desire, and to listen to the Voice of God.

§ 59. We do not, indeed, get truth out of the crude facts of experience. They are only appearances. And as Swedenborg remarks “ . . . to think from the influx of natural light not enlightened by the influx of spiritual light is merely to dream, and to speak from such thought is to make vain assertions like fortune-tellers.”⁶ But in so far as we rationally study such appearances, seeking to gain the truth underlying them, in so far do we permit a divine influx of truth into our minds. We may be content to stock our minds with mere memory-knowledges of facts ; but if we seek to understand and utilise the relations between these facts, we allow the influx of a higher order of ideas into our minds ; and we receive ideas of a still higher order when we endeavour rationally to discover the spiritual significance—the purpose and cause—of such facts. On the other hand, in so far as we deny right reason, and rely upon external authority, in so far do we shut out the spiritual light. The crude facts of experience are, as it were, the symbols employed in a magic

The True
Empiricism
and the False

⁵ JOHN LOCKE : *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, §§ x. and xi. (edited by Thomas Fowler, D.D., 1901).

⁶ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG : *The Intercourse of the Soul and the Body*, § xiv. 8 (trans. by John Presland, 1897).

ritual whereby Truth manifests herself to our spiritual sight. But, to continue the figure, these symbols may be used either for white magic or for black : by means of the appearances of nature we can confirm ourselves either in those doctrines which are true or in those doctrines which are false, according to whether the spiritual light which alone can enlighten natural experience is received or rejected. The same holds good of the words of Holy Writ, if, as I believe, the mystical view of both Nature and the Bible (as developed by Swedenborg) be valid. One who studies the Bible in its merely literal sense, seeking for no meanings beyond those of "the letter which killeth," may not only confirm himself in stupid doctrines, *e.g.*, that the world was created in seven days, but in immoral ones, *e.g.*, that God is vengeful ; just as a person, who blindly accepts natural facts without examining them scientifically, may confirm himself in foolish superstitions (see § 44), or as one, who fails to take a truly philosophical view of nature, may confirm himself in the belief that nature is the cause and origin of all things, and that there is no God. It is quite otherwise, however, with those who are truly rational.

Pragmatism

§ 60. There is another criterion of truth to be considered—the pragmatic. This is the appeal

to the essential goodness of truth. To the Greek thinkers it seemed natural to conclude that Goodness, Truth and Beauty are essentially one ; but the tendency of nineteenth-century pessimistic philosophy was to separate these elements of fundamental reality, and to set them against one another. But this attitude is generally associated with that spurious realism which places an impenetrable wall between our ideas and reality, and renders true knowledge impossible, or, at least, renders any criterion of it impossible. Pragmatism, which regards " true " as connoting, not less than " good," that which is *useful*, indicates a tendency towards the older, and I think, more valid, point of view. But before we can accept the pragmatic definition of truth as that which " works," we must first settle the question " to what end ? " Statements which serve for the purposes of daily life,⁷ and are, therefore, pragmatically true, will not serve for the purposes of more exact science, and are, therefore, pragmatically false. Universality here appears to be the needed criterion. The statements of science will serve for the purposes of daily life, though no doubt more cumbersome, because more exact, than the common statements usually employed for such purposes. But

⁷ For example, the statements that the sun rises, that water boils at 212° F., etc.

these latter statements are valid only within their own sphere. Hence they are less near approximations to absolute truth than are the statements of science.

The need for defining the end by means of which truth may be pragmatically judged is the more necessary in the sphere of Ethics. What a man considers as his good, may involve the reverse of good to the rest of humanity. Hence, what a man might pragmatically judge to be morally true, might for the rest of humanity be, again pragmatically considered, morally false. Here again universality seems to be the needed criterion, and if we define the good of an individual as that which ministers to the happiness of the whole of humanity, or as many members of it as may be concerned, then we may, I think, apply the pragmatic criterion to moral truth.

The Unity of
Goodness
and Truth

§ 61. As Swedenborg so well teaches, divine love and truth, though separable in thought, make one in actuality, as do their most adequate symbols, the heat and light of the sun. That which is really true is good ; that which is genuinely good is true. Falsity cannot result in genuine good, nor truth in other than merely temporary (and therefore, only apparent) evil.

Truth is more than a matter of mere knowledge ;

it is something to be lived, not merely to be known. Truths do not really become a man's until he makes them part and parcel of his very being. "Faith without works is dead." A living faith is the perception of truth combined with a life lived in accordance with its dictates. It is truth in the will as well as in the understanding. If a man's principles do not result in a good—that is, a genuinely altruistic—life, then, either these principles are not really the man's, or else they are not true. Thus we may judge of the truth of any principle : if *really lived*, does it result in good ? Of course, every truth cannot be judged in this way, but only such as may sufficiently affect a man's actions for their effects to be observable. Moreover, in using this pragmatic criterion it is, of course, absolutely necessary that our ideas as to what is good, and what is evil, are valid : no standard may be set up which involves anything of self-love as an end, else truth will appear erroneous and error true.

To sum up : man has the power of seeing truth when presented to him in a manner harmonious with his stage of intellectual development. He is taught truth largely through his own experience. He may avail himself of the experiences of others which bear a relation to his own sufficiently near for him to perceive it. And, further, he may judge of the truth of principles according to whether they

make for good or evil. Thus, *all truth is gained through the rational interpretation of experience, which is revealed by God and discovered by man.*

Conclusion

§ 62. To conclude this brief, but I hope not altogether inadequate, contribution to a subject of no little difficulty, I shall quote the following beautiful passage from Swedenborg. It has reference to the state of those beatified souls who are termed by him the "celestial angels," and who are wholly united to (though not absorbed in) God, in virtue of a perception of their utter dependency upon Him for all the truth that they know and the good that they effect. *They* are in full conscious possession and use of that power which I have termed "intuition" or the "sight of the soul," a power which bears fruit in exact proportion to the degree of divine union (or moral purification) to which the soul has attained. "Divine truths," says Swedenborg, "appear, as it were, inscribed on [the celestial] angels' minds, or as if they were implanted and innate in them; and therefore as soon as they hear genuine Divine truths they immediately perceive, acknowledge and afterwards see them, as it were, within themselves. For the angels of the third [*i.e.*, celestial] heaven never reason about Divine truths, still less do they dispute about the genuineness of any truth; nor do

they know what it is to believe or to have faith ; for they say, ‘ What is faith ? I perceive and see that the fact is so.’ They illustrate this by comparisons ; for example, it would be as if any one should see a house and the various things in and around it, and should say to his companion that he must believe that these things exist, and that they are such as he sees them to be : or as if any one should see a garden with its trees and fruit, and should say to his companion that he ought to have faith that there is a garden, and that there are trees and fruit, whereas he sees them plainly with his eyes. Hence it is that those angels never mention faith, nor have they any idea of it ; neither do they reason about Divine truths, still less dispute concerning the genuineness of any truth. But the angels of the first or lowest heaven have not Divine truths thus inscribed on their minds, because with them only the first degree of life is open ; therefore they reason concerning truths, and those who reason see scarcely anything beyond the immediate object about which they reason, or travel beyond the subject, except to confirm it in certain respects ; and when they have confirmed it, they say it is a matter of faith, and that it ought to be believed. I have spoken with angels on these subjects and they told me that the distinction between the wisdom of the angels of the third heaven and that of the angels

of the first heaven is like that between what is clear and what is obscure. They also compared the wisdom of the angels of the third heaven to a magnificent palace full of all kinds of useful things, around which are gardens on all sides, bordered by magnificent objects of many kinds ; and those angels, since they are in the truths of wisdom, can enter into the palace, and see everything, and also walk in the gardens in every direction and take delight in every thing. But it is different with those who reason concerning truths, and especially with those who dispute about them ; for they do not see truths in the light of truth, but either accept them on the authority of others, or take them from the literal sense of the Word, which they do not clearly understand ; and therefore, having no desire to possess any inward perception of the truth, they say that truths ought to be believed and that faith is to be exercised on them. Of these, the angels said that they cannot approach the first threshold of the palace of wisdom, much less enter it and walk about in its gardens, because they stop at the first step. It is different with those who are imbued with the very truths themselves ; nothing retards their unlimited progress, because truths which are seen to be true guide them wherever they go, and lead them forth into wide fields, since every truth is of infinite extent and is

in close connexion with a multitude of other truths.

“ They said, further, that the wisdom of the angels of the inmost heaven consists principally in this, that in every object they see Divine and heavenly things, and in a series of several objects they see still more wonderful things, for everything they see has a correspondence. When they see palaces and gardens their view is not arrested by these visible objects but penetrates to the interior truths whose outward expression they are and to which therefore they correspond ; and all this takes place with infinite variety according to the appearance of the objects ; thus they obtain a comprehensive view of innumerable things in an orderly connexion, and this so affects their minds that they seem to be transported with delight.”^a It is this state of mind, I conceive, to which the true philosopher ought to aspire.

^a EMANUEL SWEDENBORG: *Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell*, § 270 (edition in Everyman's Library, trans. by F. Bayley). It should be noted that Swedenborg uses the word “ reason ” above in the sense of mere “ ratiocination,” not with the wider meaning with which I have employed it in this book. The three heavens of which he speaks are not, according to him, situated in space, but are the objectifications of different states or discrete degrees of mind.

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